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President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

Agenda item 46

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/133)

Letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/54/513)

The President: I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I am pleased to join the Assembly today to renew our common efforts to bring lasting progress to Africa. We meet at a time of change, in a spirit of determination to turn words into action. Since my previous report was issued, in April 1998, I have been gratified to see an intensification of the international community's engagement with Africa. From debt relief and conflict prevention to confronting the crisis of HIV/AIDS, Africans and non-Africans alike have invested their efforts with new energy and new ideas. Yet the statistics make clear how far we still have to go. Of the 48 least developed countries, the vast majority are in Africa. Of all the refugees in the world, the vast majority are in Africa. Of the children orphaned by AIDS in the world by the end of this year, over 90 per cent will be in Africa. And in Central Africa, we are witnessing the persistence of a war which has drawn in a large number of States and threatens to engulf the entire region. This is a reality that must be faced honestly and soberly by all concerned if we are to improve Africa's prospects. In short, Africa needs our efforts as much as ever.

The United Nations has been a partner in Africa's decolonization and development from its earliest years. Almost every agency and operational arm of the United Nations has a special programme devoted to Africa, and the Organization spends a great part of its resources on Africa. The United Nations is already broadly engaged in Africa. But it needs to be engaged more effectively. That is the simple lesson of our decades of experience with Africa. The question is, do we have the will to apply it?

In presenting my report on Africa, I identified three general areas which deserved particular attention. First, I stated that Africa had to demonstrate the political will to rely upon political rather than military solutions to problems. Despite setbacks in some areas, I believe we can speak of broad progress in recent years. I refer, in particular, to the determination expressed at the OAU summit that Governments which come to power through unconstitutional means could no longer expect to be received as equals in an Assembly of elected heads of State. Let me also reiterate my hope that the day will come when this Assembly follows Africa's lead and applies similarly stringent standards.

The international community, too, has shown a stronger commitment to finding political solutions to

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political problems, notably through new initiatives in the area of conflict prevention and in the use of "smart sanctions" to target the leaders of regimes and rebel groups acting in violation of international humanitarian law. In this regard, I would like to pay tribute to the ground-breaking work being done by the Angola sanctions Committee, under the leadership of Ambassador Bob Fowler of Canada, and the group of experts who are working to strengthen the sanctions regime against UNITA. They are helping raise awareness about the need to target those who are exploiting conflict in Africa for profit.

Secondly, I urged Africa to summon the political will to take good governance seriously, ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law and promoting transparency and capability in public administration. Since the release of the report, there has also been progress in many of these areas. Political reforms have resulted in a situation where democratically elected Governments in Africa are the norm rather than the exception. Constitutional rule and respect for human rights are now considered fundamental. Non-governmental and community-based organizations are working with Governments in addressing critical issues such as illiteracy, health and poverty eradication.

Thirdly, I called on African Governments to enact and adhere to the various reforms needed to promote economic growth. On average, African countries have continued to experience positive growth. However, a number of structural constraints and challenges continue to affect the potential transformation of the region. Among these are endemic poverty, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the debt burden and the persistence of internal conflicts in a number of countries.

As I stated in my report, the debt burden of African countries has to be substantially reduced in order for them to be able to use their scarce resources more productively. I welcome the initiatives launched to provide faster, deeper and broader debt relief through changes in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative framework. I wish especially to urge international financial institutions to take additional measures to assist countries emerging from conflict. Their resources are urgently needed for rehabilitation and reconstruction, which in turn will serve to prevent the recurrence of conflict.

If there is one area, however, that has witnessed a dramatic deterioration since the publication of my report, it is the effect of HIV/AIDS on every aspect of the continent's prospects. Of the 25 countries most affected by HIV/AIDS, 24 are in Africa. Recent statistics from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS show that now, for the first time, women infected by the disease outnumber men: 55 per cent of all Africans infected are women. The impact of HIV/AIDS on skilled human resources, already in short supply, has the potential to imperil any progress in social indicators. HIV/AIDS is not only a medical problem, it is a development problem. It is not only a national problem, it is an international problem. It must be dealt with as such, by Africans and by Africa's partners around the world.

Beyond these key challenges, I am pleased to report tangible progress in a number of other areas. In the area of children and armed conflict, a number of steps have been taken to ensure that the protection, rights and welfare of children are addressed in peace negotiations from the outset. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has been strengthened, from preventive diplomacy to training and contingency planning. In Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Burundi, we are pooling our efforts for maximum impact. In the area of post-conflict peace-building, concrete measures have been taken, with the establishment of a United Nations peace-building support office in Guinea-Bissau; and another one will be established in Central Africa early next year. While the increased cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU has improved our effectiveness, I believe we can do better in our peacemaking and peacekeeping endeavours.

Our cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the Sierra Leone peace process and our continuing work with the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement offer lessons that we must apply in the future. I welcome, therefore, the attention devoted to conflict prevention at the current ECOWAS summit. In particular, I salute the ECOWAS moratorium on small arms, which addresses one of the key concerns of my report.

I wish to suggest three ways in which this meeting can have a lasting impact on our common aim of implementing the report's recommendations and turning its aspirations into achievements. Before doing so, however, allow me say that the priority attention we all believe must be given to Africa has to be reflected in the budgetary and financial priorities of the General Assembly. We cannot say that Africa is a priority, and

then deny the United Nations the resources to give tangible expression to that priority.

First, the General Assembly should establish its own working group, comprising a cross-section of African States and other Member States engaged in Africa's future. The Secretariat stands prepared to provide substantive support to such a working group. The group could usefully take stock of the progress made so far in the implementation of the report's proposals, and could consolidate and ensure coherence in the efforts to implement them further. Otherwise, the proliferation of initiatives threatens to create more problems than solutions.

Secondly, I wish to propose that the working group seek new ways of creating effective partnerships to reduce the rates of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Specifically, I urge members to lend their support to the initiative launched last week when, for the first time, African Governments met with non-governmental organization partners, with donors from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and with the private sector to map out new ways to fight the epidemic effectively and comprehensively. I urge members to draw on the knowledge and commitment of that coalition in their own efforts to make a difference in the fight against AIDS.

Thirdly, I wish to propose that the working group focus on new ways to enhance assistance to post-conflict societies, including through the cancellation of debt. Given the essential link between peace and prosperity, we cannot hope to achieve lasting development so long as conflicts go unchallenged, and so long as prevention is not made a priority.

What gives me confidence today is that African States are themselves more engaged than ever in taking hold of their own destiny and finding solutions to their own problems.

The international community has an opportunity to complement these efforts and achieve success in its attempt to ensure Africa's peace and prosperity in the next century.

The President: I should like to inform members that, in a letter dated 5 October 1999 addressed to the President of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States for the month of October, requested that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the observer of the Holy See on agenda item 46, "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

Taking into account the importance attached to the issue under discussion, it is proposed that the General Assembly should take a decision on that request.

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear the observer of the Holy See?

It was so decided.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): As the representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), it gives me pleasure to state the views of Algeria in today's General Assembly debate on agenda item 46, "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". I am especially pleased to do so because the main purpose of our deliberations should be to define some general guidelines for the open-ended working group that the General Assembly decided at the fifty-third session to create. In a letter dated 4 October 1999, I requested that the group be set up in order to follow up the main recommendations of the report of the April 1998 report of the Secretary-General (A/52/871) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Here, my delegation cannot fail to reaffirm its great appreciation to Mr. Kofi Annan for his commitment to Africa, which is clearly reflected in his initiatives with regard to our continent, such as his 1998 report. The statement the Secretary-General just made and his interesting proposals with respect to the working group confirm that he holds Africa dear. We are grateful to the Secretary-General. I am pleased to note that the goals — the prevention of conflict, post-conflict peacekeeping or peace-building and the promotion of sustainable development — that underlie the endeavours of the Secretary-General are broadly endorsed both by Africa and by the world at large. But in our view, the main focus of the open-ended working group on Africa, as a forum for dialogue and agreement, should be on tracking the continent's overall development in relation in particular to the basic goal of promoting lasting peace and sustainable development.

In that connection, we are pleased to note that the establishment of the working group will have followed the rich debate of the Economic and Social Council at the coordination segment of its 1999 substantive session,

which was devoted to the theme of "Development of Africa: implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development". The Council's conclusions and recommendations are sure to prove a valuable contribution to the work of the working group.

Moreover, the Security Council debate on the situation in Africa, held in late September 1999, also had elements that will certainly be of interest to the planned working group.

Because I addressed the General Assembly yesterday on the political, economic and social situation of Africa, on the many complex challenges facing it, and on the expectations of the peoples of Africa, I shall focus today on the working group the Assembly has decided to establish, and shall set forth a number of preliminary ideas on that question.

There is no doubt that, as it considers the item before it, the General Assembly is aware of the complexity of setting up the working group it has decided to establish. We consider that that complexity was in large measure the cause of the delay in setting up the group. The question is indeed far from easy, because the working group will have to tackle a great number of aspects of the African problem, as set out by the Secretary-General in his report. These will have to be related to the mandated roles of the principal organs of the United Nations, notably the General Assembly, as well as to the comprehensive approach to relations between Africa and the rest of the world, especially in terms of international cooperation for development, which it is the responsibility of the General Assembly to address with the assistance of the Economic and Social Council. In this regard, it is useful to note that the report submitted to the Assembly by the Secretary-General on this agenda item adds somewhat to this complexity. Submitted at the same time, in effect, to two organs — the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — the report really falls much more under the competence of the latter than of the former.

Furthermore, it would have been desirable, since the report was submitted on 14 June 1999 and even though it contains elements of extreme importance to the Assembly, for the report to be complemented by an addendum, if for no other reason than to update it and broaden its scope, or by another report covering everything that might be undertaken with regard to the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations, following the example of the interim report submitted last September to the Security Council.

From this viewpoint, the reflection that the General Assembly is undertaking today will undoubtedly make it possible to clarify the situation somewhat and to set the working group on a clear course in order to gain the adherence of all around a mandate and an objective leading to consensus.

Through resolution 53/92, adopted on 7 December 1998, the General Assembly, in particular, provided for the establishment of a working group, principally in order to help it prepare for today's debate on the follow-up to the implementation of that resolution, and especially the recommendations of the Secretary-General for the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The Assembly also stressed that the working group would itself determine its mandate and its working methods, taking into account the results of the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council on this question.

Pursuant to the same resolution, and while endorsing the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the need for the harmonization of international and bilateral initiatives relating to Africa that are under way, the Assembly invited African countries and their partners to determine jointly their priorities and the order of those priorities, to define their respective responsibilities and to agree on realistic and quantifiable objectives in these priority fields in the framework of the 1999 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

Even though this exercise of identification and ordering of priorities and of responsibilities could not have been fully and satisfactorily carried out in the framework of the 1999 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, and even though it would appear to be a little too ambitious, it stands out as one of the essential elements of a road map for the working group of the whole.

As its mission is necessarily to bring together the efforts of the African countries and their partners in the international community, the working group must be constantly inspired and guided by a spirit of genuine partnership, capable of promoting dialogue and constructive agreement.

The action of the working group of the whole on Africa can draw inspiration from several general ideas as

guidelines for reflection. I would like to present them to the Assembly.

First is the political will to make a genuine and resolute commitment to accompany Africa in its efforts of reform, development and harmonious integration into the world economy.

Second is strict respect for the priorities of the African countries as defined by them, and the promotion of a sense of ownership and control on the part of Africans in the actions and cooperative projects to be carried out along with their partners.

Third is the idea of always taking into account the particularities and specificities of individual African countries in all general approaches to cooperation with the continent.

Fourth is respect for the pace that best suits the countries of Africa when it comes to reforms and restructuring in order to enable them to adapt to the requirements of change brought about by the acceleration of the phenomenon of globalization without suffering great upsets.

Fifth is the necessary increase in the flow of resources to Africa to support the development process on the continent, in particular through official development assistance, foreign direct investment, concessional loans and the involvement of the Bretton Woods institutions.

Sixth is the idea of keeping Africa at the top of the list of United Nations priorities, devoting sufficient resources to Africa to have the desired impact without, as a consequence, affecting other regions of the world.

Seventh is the need for the international community to work harmoniously, cohesively and with better coordination of the many international initiatives for Africa. In this area, the working group could provide an excellent framework for exchanges of information, ideas and experience so as to greatly contribute to enhancing each partner's knowledge and understanding of what is being done for Africa.

Eighth is the need for greater coordination in the actions and activities of the United Nations system with a view to greater efficiency, cohesion and complementarity. The action to that end undertaken by the Economic and Social Council at its 1999 substantive session augurs well in the field.

Ninth is support for the integrated regional and subregional mechanisms in Africa.

Finally, tenth is the need to make a full commitment to Africa so as to help it rise to a level at which it can become better integrated into the world economy and thereby fully participate in world trade as an equal partner capable of contributing to the collective prosperity of the world.

In the framework of the general follow-up to be undertaken, the working group should quite clearly take account of the evolution of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), the final consideration of which is scheduled for 2002.

UN-NADAF, whose main instrument for implementation since 1997 has been the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, provides a framework for the partnership that Africa has chosen for its cooperation with the rest of the world. The mid-term evaluation that we undertook in 1996 enabled the international community to see the limitations of the international support provided up until then to the efforts of the African countries own efforts.

In his report of 13 September 1998 (A/52/871), the Secretary-General stressed that if his recommendations of April 1998 were implemented, they would have a considerable impact on the acceleration of the implementation of the UN-NADAF, including the measures and recommendations adopted at the time of the mid-term examination. In this connection, the future deliberations of the new working group of the whole on Africa could form part of the final evaluation of the UN-NADAF in the year 2002, and its contribution might prove highly useful.

Better still, and even should the necessary political will emerge more strongly, the working group might help conceive of a framework or programme to replace UN-NADAF after the year 2002. The working group would in this way broaden its scope to include everything having to do with international cooperation for sustainable development in Africa. In so doing, it would contribute to finding a single, coherent framework capable of imparting a new dynamic for dialogue and agreement between Africa and its partners rather than continuing to work through somewhat fragmented or even competing processes.

We believe it is a matter of the highest importance that United Nations organs become effectively involved in the implementation of the follow-up to the Secretary-General's recommendations.

The African continent needs the world's view of it not to be limited only to the dimension of conflicts. The concern raised by conflicts is obvious, but to turn it into a fixation, or even an obsession, will mean not doing justice to Africa, which is working precisely to turn this tragic page as quickly as possible and to devote itself to the consolidation of peace and sustainable development.

Moreover, the tendency to see the United Nations interest and role with regard to Africa only in terms of peace and security seems to add considerable confusion and threatens to have repercussions that would, at the very least, endanger respect of the mandates of the principal organs of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Allow me to express our fervent hope that the General Assembly will fully assume its role and will take up once again its responsibility with regard to the development of Africa, thereby contributing to the preservation and consolidation of genuine peace and to the promotion of sustainable development on our continent.

This is what the African peoples are expecting from this Organization at this moment when humanity is preparing to enter the twenty-first century. Unless it wishes to lose its soul, our Organization must respond to those expectations.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to say how delighted I am by the presence of the Secretary-General, and to thank him for his important introductory statement, which contains important proposals of great political import for Africa and its future.

Almost 20 years ago, the former President of North-South Commission, German Chancellor Willy Brandt, noted in his report that the recasting of North-South relations was the greatest social challenge facing humanity for the remainder of the century. He added that while hunger rules, peace cannot prevail; that whoever wishes to outlaw war must also outlaw poverty; and that morally, it does not matter whether a human being is killed in war or condemned to die of hunger because of the indifference of others.

Just some three weeks before the end of the century, these problems, which were appropriately called attention to, still remain to be resolved. They are in fact at the very heart of the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871).

Since 13 April 1998, when that report was issued, it has aroused a great deal of attention and interest on the part of the international community, the United Nations system, donor countries and African States themselves. This is because our continent has become a focus of action in all fields: development assistance, aid to refugees and displaced persons, electoral assistance, emergency humanitarian aid and peacekeeping, to cite just a few.

Africa, it is true, has experienced the largest number of conflicts over the past 50 years. It has the largest number of refugees in the world. For these reasons, it deserves sustained attention.

Following consideration of the Secretary-General's report, the General Assembly, on 7 December 1998, adopted resolution 53/92. This resolution, which was the subject of serious and difficult negotiations, over which my delegation had the honour of presiding, noted with deep concern the proliferation of conflicts in Africa and the increasing commission of atrocities against civilian populations, in particular women, children and personnel of humanitarian organizations. The General Assembly also expressed concern about the serious impact of such socio-economic problems as increasing poverty. It recommended increasing the volume and effectiveness of official development assistance and tackling the unsustainable debt burden. In that resolution the General Assembly also requested its President, in preparation for the discussion of the Secretary-General's report at the Assembly's fifty-fourth session, to establish an ad hoc working group of the General Assembly to monitor the implementation of resolution 53/92 and, in particular, the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

This working group has not been established, and the General Assembly, even after the deliberations in the Economic and Social Council on the report of the Secretary-General, has not really been able to provide the expected follow-up. It is my hope that the working group will soon be established so that it can begin to work by January 2000.

We all agree that the situation on our continent is difficult and complex — but it is not desperate.

In addition to conventional, inter-State conflicts, there is now a new type of intra-State conflict with subregional effects. There are mutinies by factions of armed forces that begin as simple salary disputes and then turn into political conflicts. Certain countries have changed their border policies, calling into question the principle, adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), of the inviolability of borders inherited from the colonial period. There are violent clashes between opposition groups and those in power. There are armed civilian groups. There are problems stemming from the difficulty of controlling refugee groups along the borders between States and from non-respect for the civilian and humanitarian nature of the refugee camps and refugee settlement areas. These new contributors to violence, all of which can be seen in sub-Saharan Africa these days, deserve to be treated seriously and more effectively.

I am gratified that the Secretary-General has effectively called attention to the complexity of the African situation and that he has suggested relevant measures and initiative to deal with it.

The follow-up report that he submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session held last July in Geneva, and that is now before the General Assembly, deserves our full attention. The same applies to the progress report submitted to the Security Council (S/1999/1008).

My delegation is gratified that the Secretary-General has emphasized social development, facilitating trade and increasing capital flows to Africa, as well as support for the process of integration and cooperation that is developing throughout the continent.

In general terms, it would be appropriate to highlight and to commend the many initiatives taken in recent months at the bilateral and multilateral levels along the lines of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report.

As for the African countries, they have registered remarkable progress in many fields. Good governance, transparency and the rule of law are gradually becoming the rule throughout the continent. Various seminars and forums have been held in Africa and elsewhere on these questions, including on the struggle against corruption. The Rabat declaration, adopted last December by the African ministers of the civil service, stressed the importance of professionalism and ethical standards in civil service, as did the Accra forum on governance in Africa, held in June 1998. Regarding the issue of corruption, I would like to say that my country is in favour of the drafting, under the auspices of the OAU, of an African convention to combat corruption in Africa.

Many African countries have undertaken courageous reforms to liberalize their economies and to amend their legal and regulatory frameworks. A forum to review the competitiveness of African economies was organized in Dakar, Senegal, in March 1999, at the initiative of the United Nations Development Programme. All participants in that forum agreed on measures to be taken to create a positive environment for investment and to enhance competitiveness.

In the field of human resources, a plan of action was prepared by the agencies of the United Nations system targeting 15 African countries with the lowest rates of primary education and low rates of literacy for women. At the recent Algiers summit, the OAU adopted a programme of action for the Education Decade that emphasizes the need for basic education for all and for the education of girls and of refugee and displaced child-soldiers.

In the field of public health, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS has intensified its action in Africa, as evidenced by the meeting on international partnership in the fight against AIDS in Africa, held here at Headquarters yesterday and the day before under the auspices of the Secretary-General. I also know that the roll back malaria campaign in Africa, led by the World Health Organization, aims to cut the number of deaths from malaria by 75 per cent by 2015.

In other fields that are equally vital to the survival and development of Africa, progress has been slow, even non-existent, although the number of bilateral and multilateral initiatives has increased.

The failure of the recent World Trade Organization negotiations in Seattle attests to the major difficulties and obstacles in the way of allowing the interests of the developing countries, especially in Africa, to be taken into account in international trade relations. It is true that efforts have been made, both bilaterally and, for instance, in the framework of relations between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, to promote market access for African exports. Much

remains to be done, however, by the industrialized partners towards reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers.

The drastic cut in official development assistance and the structural weakness of domestic savings in most African countries likewise prompt us to recognize that international assistance should be considerably increased, both in quality and quantity, and urgently needs to be restructured.

My delegation commends the bold proposals made by the United Nations Secretariat to mobilize emergency assistance for the post-conflict economic recovery of 11 poor and heavily indebted sub-Saharan African countries. My delegation also welcomes the initiative of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to establish a body composed of high-level personalities and experts in finance and development, appointed jointly by creditors and debtors, to undertake an independent assessment of the debt sustainability of African countries.

The Joint Conference of Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Economic and Social Development and Planning, meeting in Addis Ababa last May, also urged the industrialized countries to completely cancel debts arising from bilateral technical aid for the poorest countries and to reduce all other bilateral debts of the poorest countries by at least 90 per cent.

My country welcomes the important initiatives taken by the G-7 last June in Cologne aimed at reducing by $27 billion the debt stock of the countries involved in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. This Initiative, however, should be considerably broadened, its criteria for access made more flexible and the duration of the alleviation process reduced from six to two or three years. In addition to these initiatives, my country commends measures taken by the Nordic countries, France, the United States of America, Canada, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, Belgium and other bilateral partners to alleviate African indebtedness.

As the Secretary-General clearly stresses in his interim report, Africa today, on the eve of the third millennium, is characterized by a remarkable mix of achievements and unresolved problems, of potential exploited and opportunities wasted. As the report itself recognizes, Africans are taking charge of their own political destiny. Important commitments made by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at the Algiers summit and at the fourth extraordinary session in Sirte, Libya, attest to that. African leaders are prepared to recognize their mistakes of the past and to work sincerely together to ensure a better future for the African continent. I would add that they need not compassion for their situation, but acts of concrete solidarity. They need a fruitful, disinterested partnership directed towards action for development and peace.

These African countries need support structures for post-conflict peace-building. They need improved coordination of humanitarian action in the field and greater consistency in development assistance initiatives. They need significant contributions from partner countries to help finance the OAU peace funds and to ensure the success of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution that they themselves have established. They also need a rapid and effective response from the international community, especially from the Security Council, in crisis situations.

Security Council resolution 1196 (1998) on arms embargoes; 1197 (1998) on cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations in the field of African peacekeeping capacities; 1208 (1998) on security in refugee camps; and 1209 (1998) on illicit arms flows in Africa all deserve to be followed by action.

As we see, there are many fields of action in which the international community can make things happen in Africa. On the threshold of the new millennium, the international community should therefore mobilize itself in the framework of a new coalition for the financing of development and the achievement of a stable peace in Africa in order to allow the continent to share with the rest of the world the well-being and destiny of humankind.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the members of the Group of African States, may I begin by conveying to the Secretary-General our appreciation and thanks for his presence among us this afternoon on the occasion of the debate on the development of Africa. We know that he rearranged his entire schedule in order to be with us. We also thank him for his highly enlightening introductory statement, which will inspire the African Group to refine the draft resolution that it is to submit under this agenda item.

Mr. Morel (Seychelles), Vice-President, took the Chair.

For the second consecutive year, the General Assembly is considering the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflicts and the promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871). That report, which has been unanimously praised because of its relevance, clarity of analysis and realism regarding the actions proposed, has been discussed at length and in depth in the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It was the subject of a high-level seminar held in Yaoundé under the auspices of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The records of the seminar have been published as an official document of the current session of the General Assembly under the symbol A/54/209.

For Africa, the time for the implementation of the priority recommendations has come. It is high time, as the Secretary-General has just said, that words were translated into action. Everything calls on us to do so.

As the Assembly knows, despite some glimmers of political and economic hope in recent years, Africa does not always behave well. Debt, wars, hunger, poverty, AIDS — Africa has been spared none or almost none of the things that destabilize.

I wish once again to congratulate the Secretary-General on the quality of his progress report, which clears the way for an efficient policy: governance, social development, the elimination of discrimination against women, development, trade, financial resources and regional cooperation.

I also wish to point out that this report comes out in a double context: on one hand, there is the ongoing decline in resources for operational activities, and on the other hand, we have the involvement of large numbers of institutions within and outside the United Nations in development activities.

The priorities we face in connection with the situation in Africa relate indisputably to peace and development. The first priority is peace. In this connection, one must salute the efforts made by the United Nations to restore peace to countries torn apart by conflict and to consolidate peace where guns have fallen silent. In this regard, we welcome the decisions of the Security Council relating to the deployment of two large peacekeeping operations, in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The news of the deployment of 6,000 Blue Helmets in Sierra Leone has strengthened the hopes of the people of that country that they will be able to escape once and for all the nightmare into which they were plunged by the civil war that has bled their country white. The decision of the Security Council to send military observers to the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a prelude to the deployment of a multinational peacekeeping force, which in the view of all is essential for a return to normalcy in the country, also brings high hopes.

These actions of the international community must be strengthened, and they certainly cannot bear full fruit without the genuine will on the part of African countries to put an end to the conflicts that have plunged their people into mourning. Peace and security in Africa must be — as they are — their highest priority; and the international community must respond with growing and more determined support for the undeniable efforts deployed by Africans for peace on their continent.

Therefore, there is a need to reiterate the appeals already launched for generous contributions to be made to the trust funds of the United Nations and the OAU established to improve preparedness for conflict prevention and peacekeeping in Africa.

It is also appropriate to call for the implementation of a joint United Nations-OAU mechanism, in order to strengthen coordination and ensure better utilization of resources and follow-up measures in the field of training and information on peacekeeping questions.

The struggle for peace and security in Africa is also a matter for subregional organizations. Their role is crucial. We have seen this in West Africa, with the Economic Community of West African States. Thanks to the Southern African Development Community and to the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, all the parties involved in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have approved and signed the Lusaka peace agreements.

It is also appropriate to salute and to encourage the initiatives of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in East Africa. In Central Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States has recently established an organ specifically for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts, the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX).

It is now more necessary than ever to empower the genuine will of Africans to mobilize in favour of peace

and security and to back it with adequate material and logistic means, which only the international community can provide. Hence the importance of the support of the United Nations and its Member States for our first priority: peace and security in Africa.

The second priority is the implementation of actions that could lead to sustainable development in Africa. There can be no sustainable development without the elimination of poverty. This means meeting basic needs in education, health and water.

The efforts for development in Africa are indisputable. The work of the people is well known. But paradoxically, the more Africa works, the fewer benefits it draws from its activity. The implementation of sustainable development runs up against three important problems: financing, coordination and the effects of pandemics.

What can we say about the financing of African development, a crucial problem if ever there was one. First, we must recall the commitment of our partners to raise the level of official development assistance to 0.7 per cent of their respective gross national products.

What can we say except that, in the second place, we must urge the United Nations to seek innovative ways to mobilize resources involving the civil societies of the developed countries.

What can we say, thirdly, but that a radical solution must be found to the heavy debt burden mortgaging the efforts of the African countries. The cancellation of up to 90 per cent of the debt, as advocated by the Secretary-General, is, in this context, a necessary approach, and all the more so since it would in no way unbalance the rich countries.

When it comes to coordination, what can we say other than that it is important and that it deserves careful consideration.

The question of development in Africa is both vast and complex. The United Nations became interested in it very early on, and since then it has been carrying out intensive activity, whether directly, through organs and agencies, or through attempts at harmonization, if not coordination, with institutions pursuing the same objectives. These efforts are noteworthy, because each organ, and each donor country, follows its own natural inclination, with its own objectives, logic, dynamics and conditionalities.

Development assistance, already fragmented, runs the risk of being fractured. African States risk not having their own policies any longer; their needs are too pressing for them to be able to resist the temptation to accommodate each potential donor. The priorities of the donor become their priorities, under penalty of the dramatic drying up of external resources. Therefore, we must strengthen the harmonization framework for coherent external assistance that allows each country to be master of its own choices and initiatives, which such assistance would support and nourish.

This is why we appreciate the existence of the resident coordinators, who work to rationalize the actions of all the branches of the United Nations system in each country. The joint work of all these institutions must be strengthened, and the activity of each one of them must also be given a new impetus. No one questions the need to revitalize the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in particular. But there is reason to be concerned about the reform process in that institution, which devotes 65 per cent of its activities to Africa.

The changes that have been announced here and there pose fundamental, twin problems, the first of which relates to the mandate of UNDP, an agency for financing operational activities. UNDP could see this function modified if administration alone were placed at the centre of its concerns. If this debatable point of view were to prevail, it would in any case necessitate the support of the General Assembly. The second problem is that of the reconfiguration and redeploying of UNDP's activities, which we hope would not be to the detriment of Africa.

The struggle against pandemics is also a problem for sustainable development. This is why the struggle against AIDS must be intensified. The guilty silence that too often prevails with regard to this epidemic is not the best means of avoiding the horrible reality. AIDS, as the Secretary-General recalls in his report on the work of the Organization, threatens the very existence of several African countries. More than ever before, the United Nations must resolutely lead the crusade against AIDS.

The third and last priority seems to us to be the establishment of the working group. It would be highly desirable, at the end of this debate, for the establishment and convocation of the working group provided for in General Assembly resolution 53/92 to be announced. The

group would be entrusted with following up the implementation of the recommendations formulated by the Secretary-General in his report, and its agenda would include the three priorities that I have just mentioned.

The various proposals and reflections heard in this debate will enrich the definition of the mandate of the working group.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): The report of the Secretary-General that our Assembly is examining again today appeared at a time when several conflicts were occurring in various parts of our continent. These included the crises in Guinea-Bissau and in the Central African Republic, armed confrontation in Sierra Leone and wars in Eritrea and Ethiopia, in the Great Lakes, in Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Angola and in other places.

There could be no better opportunity to delve into the causes of conflict in Africa, the means of containing them and the need to promote sustainable development in their stead. The complexity of the African situation resides in the fact that that part of the world has suffered many blows that have made it the most vulnerable and the most fragile of continents.

We know the ills of colonization, which systematically broke down the fabric of African society. Colonization provided fertile ground for inter-ethnic wars, causing bitter antagonism between African brothers of the same race and among dissimilar populations. It must be recognized that many current conflicts are actually prolongations of divisions dating back to that period.

The President returned to the Chair.

Indeed, if we were to characterize the 30 or so conflicts in Africa in 40 years of independence, we would see that almost all of them have the fact of colonialism as their starting point; it is not just border conflicts that bear colonial traces. Certain crises smack of colonialism because of the active and perverse influence of multinationals, of oil and diamond companies, of foreign arms merchants and so on. In fact, the idea defended by some that Africa should be compensated in the form of *pretium doloris* because of the immense damage of all types caused by colonialism is not so far-fetched.

Nonetheless, we share the Secretary-General's view that some African conflicts have other causes. The common denominator is basically political rivalries that are at the root of many coups on the continent.

Africa needs peace, peace commensurate with the trials that it has endured throughout the ages. But peace, as we all know, is fundamentally illusory, and above all it is a difficult and sometimes perilous quest. This is why the actions undertaken by the United Nations in this field, well described in the report of the Secretary-General, deserve the sincere and massive support of the international community. The United Nations misfortunes in Somalia remind us that organizing a peacekeeping mission is not a sinecure. It is therefore important that the United Nations develop its peace strategies in close cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and with subregional organizations — with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and in Eastern Africa the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). We know that this kind of cooperation, for example, made it possible to restore peace to Liberia.

It is on this basis alone, on the basis of unassailable stability, that our continent will be able to wage the only battle that is really worthwhile — the battle against underdevelopment — in other words, against poverty, misery and against ignorance.

Just a few days from the start of the new millennium, the question of the economic development of Africa remains more than ever a source of concern for us all. Having long theorized on the virtues of one economic policy or another, here we find ourselves at a crossroads.

How can we promote sustainable development in Africa?

It is vital that the African States break the impasse; that they stop speculating on the basis of expediency and, rather, completely take charge of their destiny. Development assistance is undoubtedly a necessity, even as it begins seriously to lose steam because of the decline in international solidarity. Resolving the African debt is certainly of prime importance, as is access to markets for African goods. Stemming the deterioration of the terms of trade is certainly an imperative.

These are all givens when we discuss the development of Africa and ways of improving its economic situation. No one denies this. No one calls into

question the importance of these indispensable parameters for development. But it is obvious that they alone are not enough to attain development objectives if they are not backed and sustained by the strong will to take charge of our own destiny. In other words, Africa needs to be aware of its own realities. It needs to determine clearly the direction it wants to take and what it wants to accomplish. Above all, it must be aware of its many assets which, if rationally developed and wisely managed, would make it a necessary interlocutor in the world partnership.

Africa does indeed have immense potential with its wealth of raw materials. With one of youngest populations in the world, it constitutes an immense pool of labour. Composed of some 50 States, it undeniably represents a market of prime importance. This means that while international assistance remains a needed stage, ultimately Africa must rely above all on its own strengths. This is the only way for it to deal with globalization, whose watchwords are productivity and competitiveness.

It is true that some attempts have already been made in this respect, but without real results. We have in mind in particular the Lagos Plan of Action, developed by the OAU in cooperation with the United Nations, which was intended to provide Africa with endogenous, self-focused and self-managed development. We also have in mind the Abuja Treaty, which defined the guiding principles of economic development that takes African realities into account, but it too has been slow to take shape.

Three months ago in Sirte, in Libya, in a sound initiative, the African States resolved to promote the genuine economic development of the continent on the basis of the clear realization that it is up to Africa to take charge of its own destiny, its own development.

It is to be hoped that this solemn commitment on the part of Africa's foremost leaders will mark the beginning of genuine, integrated, united and sustainable development in the continent in peace and security.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): It is quite possible that if one were to discuss Africa outside of these walls, among the first questions raised would be that of the seemingly unending conflicts in Africa. In other words, among the things that Africa is becoming known for is its wars. True, the conflicts in Africa are a serious matter. Yet Africa has more to offer than conflict.

South Africa is of the fundamental view that there is a basic need to understand the root causes of conflict. This understanding will assist us in finding lasting solutions to them.

Furthermore, South Africa believes that poverty is dividing our societies into irreconcilable camps of haves and have-nots. The inequalities within societies constitute the root causes of the intra-State conflicts that are now common in Africa. It is important to understand this, because when the United Nations was founded, more than 50 years ago, there was hope that the Organization would help resolve inter-State conflicts. Ironically, at the dawn of the third millennium, the United Nations finds itself addressing conflicts within States.

We in southern Africa have embarked on subregional economic development projects aimed at alleviating the effects of poverty. Our aim is to create sustainable development with projects such as the Maputo Development Corridor, the Lesotho Highland Water Project, the Lubombo Corridor, the Trans-Kalahari Road, the joint expansion of an electricity grid between Namibia and South Africa and the recently rehabilitated Cabora Bassa Dam in Mozambique.

My delegation wishes to reiterate that matters of trade play an important role in the attainment of the objectives of peace and sustainable development for the African continent. In this context, the lack of consensus at the recent World Trade Organization Ministerial (WTO) Meeting in Seattle is a setback for Africa. We believe that it is imperative for the WTO to address export issues of interest to African countries, especially market access for agricultural and non-agricultural products. Of equal importance for the African continent is the immediate and unconditional implementation by the developed countries of provisions for bound, duty-free, quota-free market access in favour of the least developed countries, the majority of which are in Africa.

Attempts to coordinate international activities aimed at addressing African economic recovery will fall short if peace and security are not guaranteed for all our people. My delegation fully supports international endeavours to resolve conflicts in Africa. This is why the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict in Africa is an important contribution to the debate on this subject. My delegation supports the proposals made by the Secretary-General today and looks forward to working in an open-ended group of the General Assembly to deal with African matters.

Despite the fact that many African countries have embarked on economic restructuring and liberalization programmes, most economies on the continent continue to be adversely affected. Amid a global economic boom, Africa's market share continues to decline. This is further compounded by reduced official development assistance and foreign direct investment to Africa. South Africa is concerned about the fact that official development assistance fell from $23 billion in 1992 to $18 billion in 1997. At the same time, we are encouraged that the United Kingdom and the United States have increased their official development assistance in their 1999 budgets and that Sweden has pledged to increase its official development assistance to 0.73 per cent of gross national product for the year 2001. Furthermore, it is most gratifying to learn that Norway intends to re-establish its official development assistance at 1 per cent of gross national product and that Denmark is already contributing 1 per cent of gross national product in official development assistance.

At the same time, my delegation welcomes recent initiatives to enhance economic cooperation and social development in Africa. To this end, we welcome in particular the signing and the ratification of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. We urge all participating countries to create the necessary environment to give full expression to the ideals embodied in the Treaty.

In recent times, the Bretton Woods institutions have begun to design economic recovery plans that take into consideration the opinions of Governments, which, after all, must be ultimately responsible for the crucial implementation phase. This positive mutual interaction should maximize the possibility of the successful implementation of plans for economic growth and development. It is for this reason that we have been following with keen interest the debate within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as it restructures itself to accommodate the reduction in funding by donors. UNDP is the only face of the United Nations that people in the developing world ever see. Its survival is the best guarantee that the United Nations will continue to play a fundamental role in promoting development and alleviating poverty around the world.

South Africa believes that conflicts are the result of a failure to resolve disputes amicably and timeously. It is quite remarkable that Africans are now themselves involved in resolving conflicts. In this regard, we note the commitment and intention expressed by African leaders at the 1999 Algiers summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to exclude from their ranks, with effect from its next summit, all leaders who have come to power through unlawful means. This gesture constitutes a noteworthy desire to contribute constructively to the promotion of democracy and good governance on the continent.

In our subregion, democracy and good governance are thriving. For many years, Botswana has carried the torch for democracy in our region. In the last 12 months Botswana, South Africa, Malawi, Namibia and Mozambique have successfully held democratic elections. The United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe are scheduled to hold national elections within the next 12 months. For its part, Lesotho is in the middle of a transformation that will lead to yet another democratic election in that country. But this does not mean that only peace prevails in our subregion. The people of Angola continue to suffer under Mr. Jonas Savimbi's bloody aggression. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lusaka peace Agreement seems to hold hope for that war-torn nation.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to underscore its view that it is important for the United Nations to be seen as a body that seeks to maintain and promote peace in Africa. The United Nations, its organs and its agencies must assist in preventing new conflicts from erupting on the continent. In this regard, South Africa supports the need to strengthen early warning systems in Africa so that the United Nations can become involved before all-out war breaks out. All conflict prevention measures should receive surpassing attention, including preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment and early warning systems. Conflict prevention is by far the most cost-effective measure we have to resolve conflicts in Africa.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): We must admit that Africa has an enormous wealth of natural and human resources. In the era of globalization, Africa must proceed quickly but cautiously in a very complex international environment that abounds in opportunities and risks. The interests of the States of Africa necessitate that they be integrated positively into the world economy in order to achieve prosperity for their peoples and to avert the risks of marginalization, which could cause them to lag behind the march of civilization and lead to instability and wars that would undoubtedly affect international peace and security.

In this context, we have carefully read the report of the Secretary-General on development in Africa. That report also deals with the most important development challenges currently confronting African countries. We also listened very attentively to the statement made by the Secretary-General earlier.

Egypt believes that efforts for development in Africa must be based on two main foundations. First, international efforts must be intensified to create an international environment favourable to development. Secondly, African States must intensify their efforts in the field of social and economic reform, in order to mobilize the creative energies of the African peoples, thereby enabling them to keep up with the march towards development and to achieve prosperity for coming generations.

Egypt therefore welcomed the debate held last July in the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system with regard to the implementation and coordinated follow-up of initiatives on African development, which include the Cairo Programme of Action, adopted by the States members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in June 1995.

We welcomed the agreement achieved during the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) last September on the elements of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative; the majority of such countries are in Africa. Nevertheless, most of the commitments made by the World Bank and the IMF have so far not been implemented. On the contrary, the President of the World Bank himself recently declared that that important initiative is in a very precarious situation because the funding required for its implementation is lacking.

Furthermore, we were all looking forward to the third Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization, which was held in Seattle a few days ago. We had hoped that it would result in a strengthening of the bases of the multilateral international trading system as a result of a serious attempt by the international community to deal with the reasons for the failure of developing countries, particularly African countries, to benefit from the opportunities created by economic globalization and the general global shift towards trade liberalization. Unfortunately, we were disappointed. Regrettably, we witnessed injustice with regard to the interests of the poor countries. The conference did not even arrive at an agreement on exemptions from export duties for the least developed countries, the majority of which are also in Africa, even though such exports constitute no more than 0.5 per cent of world trade.

Egypt is sounding the alarm. We declare that it has become increasingly important for the international community fully to discharge its humanitarian, moral and political responsibilities towards the African continent. In this regard, I would like to reaffirm that the economic problems of the continent have been thoroughly discussed, and that international organizations, whether within or outside the United Nations system, possess all the information they need about the challenges to development efforts in Africa and the ways to overcome them. The political will is thus urgently needed to promote the coordination and effectiveness of all efforts so that they can become harmonious with development priorities as determined and developed by the African States.

Necessary international resources for the implementation of the programmes and projects agreed upon are also required, together with the establishment of a constructive partnership between Governments, international institutions, the private sector and civil society institutions in an integrated system capable of achieving all aspects of development.

In this regard, I cannot fail to reaffirm my belief that this is the only way to avert further economic marginalization, political instability, internal conflicts and conflicts between States. The countries of the African continent have made great efforts to achieve further economic integration among themselves through the implementation of the Abuja Treaty, which has led to the creation of promising economic groupings, including the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Here I would like to affirm the fundamental role that could be played by the private sector in the development process and in promoting the production and export of basic commodities, both manufactured and agricultural goods, in Africa. I would like to take this opportunity to point out that Egypt will organize a conference for business people of the States members of COMESA in February 2000. More than 2,000 business people will participate in that conference, whose aim will be to promote trade and investment among African States and between them and other countries of the world.

Africa is facing development challenges and urgently needs the United Nations to play a clear, effective and concrete role in settling the conflicts in its territories. Africa does not simply expect the United Nations to take action in containing the crises that erupt in the continent, but also expects the international community to take early action, before the expansion and exacerbation of such crises. In his report on the causes of conflict in Africa, the Secretary-General made it clear that the problem does not lie in the absence of an early warning system that can alert us to the possible eruption of certain crises in the continent. Rather, the problem lies in the need to follow up such early warnings with speedy and effective measures. Unfortunately, we have noticed recently that the United Nations has not been taking adequate action to that end.

The report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict in Africa contains a number of ambitious recommendations aimed at consolidating and strengthening security, stability and sustainable development in the continent. These recommendations constitute the basis for the consideration by the General Assembly of this item. They also constitute a broad basis for the Security Council's treatment of problems that Africa suffers from in fields that are within its competence. Given that fact, as I made clear in my statement to the General Assembly this morning, we wonder why the progress report (S/1999/1008) on the implementation of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict in Africa was submitted only to the Security Council.

The report was not submitted to the General Assembly or to the Economic and Social Council — or to any other United Nations body involved. This certainly gives rise to concern, not only because it calls into question the principle of respect for the crucial and sensitive balance among the principal organs of the United Nations as defined in the Charter — something to which we have made constant reference — but also because it runs counter to the provisions of paragraph 14 of last year's resolution 53/92. That paragraph requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report on the causes of conflict in Africa to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, that is, the present session.

Nor can we accept that today's debate on this broad-ranging item is based solely on the report contained in document A/54/133, because it is exclusively economic in its focus and deals only with development in Africa. It does not address security, political or other aspects of the situation in Africa. The General Assembly must address those aspects under this agenda item.

I wish in conclusion, Sir, to thank you for your close attention to the situation in Africa and for the keen interest you have shown during your presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session regarding the attainment of our continent's objectives. In that connection, and as mentioned by the Secretary-General this afternoon, the Egyptian delegation looks forward to your establishment of the working group requested in paragraph 15 of resolution 53/92 to monitor the implementation of that resolution and, in particular, the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. I assure you, Sir, that my delegation is always ready to cooperate with you in that regard.

Ms. Kaba Camara (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Since the 13 April 1998 report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871) was issued, many initiatives have been undertaken both within and outside the United Nations. This indicates the interest of all members of the international community in this pressing and topical subject. The report of the Secretary-General has caused a great deal of United Nations ink to flow, because it sought answers from the members of the peace and development community about ways and means to help put an end to conflict and to promote lasting peace and sustainable development in Africa.

In the Security Council, on 29 and 30 September 1999, authoritative voices expressed the concerns of Africa and what it expected of the international community with a view to putting an end to its growing marginalization. We heard the central elements of the situation in Africa and of the international community's role in restoring peace to the continent.

But in today's debate on those aspects of the Secretary-General's report that relate to the areas of competence of the General Assembly, we ought to stress the social, economic and cultural factors whose interaction could create a volatile situation that, if not contained in time, could lead to civil war.

In the view of my delegation, the most important of those factors which weaken the social fabric and the political cohesion of Africa is the economic factor. It can

never be said too often that economic crises constitute the main cause of conflict in African countries. Indeed, a brief historical review will show that African countries that gained independence in a peaceful manner experienced a long period of peace until economic crises erupted in various places. The upheavals of the 1980s — resulting from skyrocketing oil prices, the sudden drop in commodity prices, the debt problem and structural adjustment policies — created social discontent that jeopardized the established order.

Structural adjustment policies intensified frustration by making it harder to gain access to health and education services for lack of investment in the social sphere. Everyone was infatuated with multi-party democracy, which had seemed to be a miracle cure for the social problems of poor countries. But unfortunately, the promotion of democracy in the context of the chronic economic crisis that characterized that "lost decade" subjected the fragile political institutions of our countries to a severe test. It was necessary to manage the economic crisis while addressing the needs of our populations, who demanded respect for human rights, and in particular for their economic, social and cultural rights.

The difficult economic environment did not allow Governments, however strong their political will, to satisfy their constituencies by providing such things as universal access to health and educational services. To the contrary, severe cuts in budgets in the social sphere led to a deterioration in social conditions so grave that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) sounded the alarm and called for adjustment policies with a human face. Dissatisfaction led to the breakup of political parties, which in turn bred political ambitions. Those who were frustrated thought that they could achieve prosperity by holding on to political power, which provoked a series of *coups d'état* and social revolts, hurling some African countries into chronic political instability.

That lack of security has deterred investors and entrepreneurs from involvement in Africa. It has dried up the flow of resources to the continent and has driven our countries into a vicious circle of poverty and social and political crisis.

We must ask how we can get Africa out of that vicious circle of poverty and political crisis, and how we can rectify the errors of the past while preserving the accomplishments of democracy. The gravest danger in this difficult situation would be to take measures and impose sanctions that would exacerbate the economic crisis and paralyse State institutions. When during a precarious period a State is unable to shoulder its responsibilities, social breakup is inevitable and conflicts will break out, bringing with them destruction, bloodshed and dire poverty.

The international community is thus obliged to take measures to contain the crisis and prevent a conflagration in the region, to manage flows of refugees and displaced persons and to try to bring the belligerents to the negotiating table by sending more mediation and good offices missions.

But as the Secretary-General has so rightly stressed, it is time for the General Assembly to replace the culture of reaction with a culture of prevention. Such a culture of prevention not only means respect for and promotion of human rights, good governance and peaceful settlement of disputes, it also implies, above all, the struggle against inequalities and poverty.

As this century comes to an end, Africa needs the mobilization of the international community to make economic recovery possible. Generous initiatives, like the Marshall Plan, must be taken for Africa in order to provide it with a reliable basis for development and an improved economic situation. The international community must increase resources, forgive external debts, diversify crops and ensure remunerative prices for African countries' export products.

It is time the African countries were given a chance to get out of the vicious circle of poverty and political and social crisis. It is time to seriously examine the possibility of promoting genuine peace based on economic and social development and access to food, to health, to education and to basic social services for all African populations.

If Africa is supported in its development efforts by a massive action such as the one launched for the new democracies in Europe, I am sure we shall witness the renaissance of Africa in the decade to come. Without development, there is no durable peace.

To conclude, I would like to stress that my delegation supports the proposal of creating a working group that would examine in detail all aspects of the Secretary-General's report and make recommendations to the Assembly.

Mr. Sharma (India): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for the informative report contained in document A/54/133. We also welcome the productive discussions during the last session of the Economic and Social Council on this report, which led to the adoption of agreed conclusions 1999/2, as well as to decision 1999/270, regarding the inclusion of these discussions and the agreed conclusions as an integral part of the reports and issues to be considered by the open-ended ad hoc working group of the General Assembly soon to be constituted.

India and Africa are inextricably and intimately bound by ties of history, age-old commerce, civilizational links and shared experience and aspirations. Both have been victims of disempowerment, deprivation and exploitation brought through the colonial experience. They are joined by their struggle for freedom. Both face gargantuan development challenges. What happens in Africa is of abiding concern to us.

India has always attached the highest priority to its cooperation with Africa, which, we hope, stands as a true example of the spirit of South-South cooperation. A primary instrument of our technical cooperation with countries of Africa has been the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC). About 20,000 foreign nominees, primarily from Africa, have received training in India under this programme in diverse fields including banking, foreign trade, hydrology and water resources, communications, electronics, satellite imaging, agriculture, small and medium industry, software, renewable energy sources and other areas. Every year, in some of our best educational institutions, we provide a total of 1,350 training slots, of which nearly 60 per cent are reserved for nominees from African countries.

ITEC also implements a variety of technical assistance projects in Africa. Training and mutual cooperation in the fields of human rights machinery, conduct of elections, parliamentary procedure and public sector administration are also an important component of our multifaceted relationship. Bilateral joint commissions have been developed with numerous countries in Africa to pursue the full range of cooperation in a methodical manner. Several Indian companies have established joint ventures in Africa, which bring capital, upgrade technology levels and promote job creation. Indian industry is involved in a significant way in the development of African infrastructure in sectors such as railways. There are over 16,000 students from Africa in Indian universities, availing themselves of the same highly subsidized costs of higher education as are applicable to Indian students. Ever since our independence, half a century ago, we have not believed our liberation complete without the liberation of Africa. We have also believed that, in the pursuit of self-reliance, which has informed our economic, scientific and technological policy, gains made by us are available to be shared by our developing country partners, particularly in Africa.

In line with the Secretary-General's recommendations related to regional cooperation, India is also closely involved with efforts of African countries in this direction. With our experience in South Asia, we fully recognize the advantages to be derived from enhanced regional cooperation and the creation of free trade areas. We have concluded a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and are discussing a similar memorandum of understanding with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We propose substantially to enhance our mutually beneficial links with other African regional and subregional organizations. India also participates actively in the African Development Bank as a full member.

Even the reversal of Africa's economic decline last year and the more optimistic projections for 1999 and 2000 are unlikely to make an effective dent in the levels of poverty, which would require a growth rate of 7 per cent per annum. Without growth, there can be no sustained increase in household or Government spending, in private or public capital formation, in health or social welfare. After all, distributive justice cannot imply distribution of poverty, just as sustainable development cannot mean the sustainment of poverty and deprivation. This maxim is all the more true in Africa, which is one of the few regions that suffered a decline in per capita income over the last 20 years, from $770 in 1980 to $667 in 1997. The close linkage between income and well-being is also brought out in the report of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which shows that eight of the best performers in the Borda rankings for Africa were also among the top 10 in terms of per capita income.

It is disappointing that the main contributor to growth continues to be the agricultural sector, frequently subjected to the vagaries of climatic conditions. In fact, the rate of industrial expansion in Africa actually declined from 3.4 per cent in 1997 to 2.6 per cent in 1998. The brunt of the Asian financial crisis seems to have been borne by the oil-producing and mining sectors of African countries, which were hard hit by a 32 per cent fall in oil prices during 1998. Although net oil-importing countries benefited from falling oil prices, the region overall was

a net loser in terms of output and revenue. We fully share the view on the constraints on Africa's industrialization, including difficulties associated with access to technologies, that were highlighted by the President of the General Assembly on Africa Industrialization Day last month. Like him, we believe that responding to the call "From farm to factory for a better future" would not only promote increasing the value of Africa's natural resources, but also lead to increased agricultural productivity. We hope that the importance attached by the Economic and Social Council to the industrialization of the African countries and the diversification of their mineral sectors will lead to concrete initiatives on the part of the international community to respond effectively to these challenges.

Last year the Secretary-General emphasized the importance of export-led growth for Africa. In fact, the ratio of Africa's exports to its gross domestic product is much higher than that of Latin America. But this has not done much for African growth, since African countries are basically primary produce exporters that have suffered sharp deteriorations in terms of trade. This clearly attests to the disadvantages faced by Africa in dealing with an increasingly globalized world. The integration of African countries in the world markets alone will not serve much useful purpose until the terms of integration are beneficial to them. As the latest *Human Development Report* published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) tellingly states, Africa's exports are still mainly in the primary commodities, so the region's apparent integration is actually a vulnerability to the whims of the primary commodity markets.

Rising levels of protectionism in developed country markets, frequent and unjustified use of anti-dumping duties and countervailing measures, tariff escalation and tariff peaks — all these things work to negate the comparative advantage and competitive advantage of enterprises in all developing countries, especially in Africa. For instance, how can a farmer in Africa effectively compete with his Western counterpart when the latter received an average annual subsidy of $25,000 in 1996 and when the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) spends the equivalent of 65 per cent of Africa's total gross domestic product to subsidize its farmers? The international community therefore needs to act in concert to ensure that market access to products and manufactures from Africa is available as an integrated element of the process of development in Africa, as recognized at the last session of the Economic and Social Council.

The best of intentions and goodwill for African economic development have to be matched by the provision of adequate resources. This is the crux of the problem. Eight years ago, in 1991, the United Nations estimated that the external-finance requirements of Africa would be $30 billion in 1992, which would need to be followed by an annual increase of at least 4 per cent. Today, for several reasons, the needs and urgency are far greater. But in fact, the inflow of capital to the African countries steadily declined, from $28.2 billion in 1995 to $20.8 billion in 1996. Assistance from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 1997 amounted to only $18.7 billion.

The African continent is a net transferor of resources abroad: the amount transferred is estimated at more than 25 per cent of domestic savings. A UNDP study noted last year that sub-Saharan African Governments transfer to their northern creditors four times what they spend on health care for their people. And this is when the debt is not being fully serviced. This is a compelling demonstration of the shortfall of external resources for achieving internationally agreed development objectives in Africa.

It is abundantly clear that the overall increase in private capital flows to developing countries has largely bypassed Africa. Private loans have virtually ceased for Africa, and the total outstanding short-term private debt was more than $6 billion lower in 1997 than it was in the early years of this decade. While this may improve the debt-servicing profile, it actually demonstrates the inability of financial markets to restore normal credit relations with African countries. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) estimates that resource flows declined from $4.5 billion in 1997 to $3 billion last year as a result of reduced private flows and bilateral credit. Similarly, the total foreign direct investment inflows into Africa have also been modest and fluctuating. This underlines the need for capital-exporting countries to eliminate any restrictions, formal or informal, on investments in African countries.

The ECA has clearly documented that for Africa as a whole an investment of 33 per cent of gross domestic product would be required to reach the objective of reducing the proportion of people living in poverty by 4 per cent every year. As domestic savings are estimated at 15 per cent of gross domestic product and official development assistance at another 9 per cent, this leaves a financing gap of 9 per cent of gross domestic product, which must be met through additional external resources.

In most developing economies that have experienced significant acceleration of growth, this gap was never more than 2 to 3 per cent. This underlines the special attention required by Africa, but an adequate response to this by the international community is yet to be seen.

The situation is further complicated by the unwillingness of the foreign Governments in whose banks lies the preponderant portion of the massive amounts funnelled away from the African countries to make efforts to return this capital to those to whom it rightly belongs — the people of Africa. The Secretary-General's report entitled "Summary of the economic and social situation in Africa 1998" (E/1999/16) estimated that the capital flight from Africa is as high as $22 billion. Africa urgently and desperately needs these funds, not only for development, but also to further its valiant efforts to staunch corruption and to ensure that the bribes of a corrupt international economic system do not impair the development of the honest people of Africa.

The elements of effective, transparent and accountable governance, responsive to the needs and priorities of the governed, are important, as are decentralization and the taking of decisions at those levels where they have the greatest effect. But as the President of our Assembly said a few days ago,

> "good governance and macroeconomic management per se will not transform the industrial landscape in Africa, nor will they put in place the fundamental prerequisites for partnership in a globalized economy." *(A/54/PV.58, p. 1)*

We strongly believe that linking all assistance and investment to subjective judgements regarding the promotion and protection of human rights will promote neither human rights nor prosperity. We shall continue to actively discourage such a mode of thinking.

We have noted the follow-up activities outlined in section III of the report. We commend the Roll Back Malaria initiative, as coping with this disease is not only a health concern, but also a major issue for social and economic development. The adverse economic impact of malaria has been estimated at more than 1 per cent of the gross domestic product, magnifying the 9 per cent financing gap. Similar support must be extended through various initiatives to deal with the spread of HIV/AIDS. The problem of children orphaned by AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa is a telling reminder of the social impact of this pandemic, the effects of which are compounded by the high costs of drugs for treatment of HIV/AIDS. Generic drugs are available from developing countries at less than half the price, but the demand of rent from multinationals under a rigid intellectual property rights regime will not allow relief to needy HIV/AIDS sufferers and thus imposes on Africa an unnecessary financial burden amounting to billions of dollars.

We welcome the thought being given to innovative public financing mechanisms to harness and mobilize scientific and technological resources towards defeating the diseases of developing societies. We welcome the conceptual contributions of Professor Jeffrey Sachs of the Harvard Institute of International Development and the Center for International Development to this highly laudable goal.

Our views on the pilot phase of the Comprehensive Development Framework of the World Bank, currently being voluntarily undertaken by some countries, are well known. There are concerns among developing countries that the framework could emerge as an instrument of conditionality at a later stage and restrict their freedom of decision-making. Several such questions have been raised in the Board of Executive Directors of the World Bank and answers are still being sought. We therefore believe it is premature to seek support for recommendations seeking ways of collaborating with the Comprehensive Development Framework in the context of the process of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), as is suggested in paragraph 101 of the Secretary-General's report.

We have noted with interest the stated improvements in coordination within the United Nations system of activities for the implementation of the New Agenda. But coordination is pointless when donors increasingly take unilateral action. The process then ends up coordinating the recipients alone, making a mockery of the supposedly country-driven nature of operational activities. Therefore, the crucial issue of ensuring full ownership through the involvement of all recipient countries, as mentioned by the Secretary-General, deserves highest priority. We need to move away from prescriptive approaches, resist advancing our own ideologies and predilections, respect the priority areas identified by the African countries themselves and determine areas of focus and concentration through this interchange. As the Economic and Social Council decided, the ranking of priorities for partnership must be based on an African-driven agenda and on ownership by the African countries and should

take place at the national and local levels in cooperation with development partners and civil society.

Policy naturally flows from analysis, which in turn has to be grounded in objective facts. While we have relied on the more optimistic figures of economic growth for last year, as indicated in the report of the ECA, we find that the report of the Secretary-General presents a darker picture. For example, the ECA report indicates that gross domestic product grew by 3.3 per cent in 1998, characterizing it as the highest of any region in the world, whereas the figures in the Secretary-General's report for the same periods are 2.5 per cent and the report bemoans the second consecutive yearly decline in the growth rate. We had hoped that the data provided in the reports would not vary so widely, as they make it difficult for Member States to judge the situation exactly and to suggest the approaches required, factoring in the subregional variations to adopt positive supportive policies. We hope that the open-ended ad hoc working group will accord adequate importance to these issues in its deliberations.

We are convinced that, given Africa's resources and limitless potential, it has the capacity to emerge as a major global force in the coming century. Knowing well the determination and will of the African countries, what is needed is the willingness of the international community to come forward in true partnership for African development. India would be privileged to be a partner in this great and historic enterprise and pledges to play a useful and constructive role, along with other countries, in the open-ended ad hoc working group.

Mr. Jasmi (Malaysia): My delegation is most grateful for the opportunity to deliberate on this agenda item once again in this Assembly. A little over two months ago, the situation in Africa was also the focus of Security Council deliberations and the consideration of this item today in the General Assembly underlines the importance States Members of this Organization attach to the continued well-being of Africa. Given the complexity of the issues pertaining to Africa, they must be dealt with in a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated manner if the international community intends to have a significant impact on the African situation.

We welcome the Secretary-General's progress report before us in document A/54/133. The report outlines various follow-up actions that have been initiated or completed in the areas of peace and security, as well as in development and related areas, in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on Africa of April 1998.

Mr. Bouah-Kamon (Côte d'Ivoire), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Against the backdrop of the ongoing conflicts in Africa, it is imperative that the international community make sincere and concerted efforts to close the chapter of violence which has traumatized the majority of the people of the African continent for so long. Africa's wars have not only resulted in death and destruction, but have also created more than 8 million refugees and internally displaced persons, further damaging what are already the weakest and most fragile economies in the world. We are therefore heartened by recent efforts at peacemaking in both Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and hope that they will prove successful. In this regard, Malaysia applauds Africa's efforts to establish the appropriate mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts at both the regional and the subregional levels. Clearly, regional and subregional organizations have an important role to play in preventive diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of disputes, particularly in the context of the ongoing conflicts in Africa.

In this connection, due recognition must be given to the important roles played by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, among others. We particularly welcome the outcome of the thirty-fifth OAU summit in Algiers last July and its expressed desire for a renewal of the spirit of Africa. We agree that Africa, like other regions, must learn from the lessons of the past and move forward to face the challenges of the new millennium. African countries have the right and obligation to take charge of their own destinies with, of course, the continued and sustained support and assistance of the international community.

In the context of the Security Council, African issues continue to dominate much of its work. However, many continue to be sceptical about the commitment and resolve of the Council to intervene in conflict situations in Africa. This impression was reinforced by the way the international community reacted promptly in addressing the conflicts in Kosovo and East Timor earlier this year; yet was reticent in respect of Africa. Indeed, throughout the better part of the 1990s, the Council was hesitant and reluctant to play a more active role in Africa, particularly

following its failed intervention in Somalia and the subsequent non-action in respect of the Rwandan situation, which resulted in the horrific genocide there. It was not until 1998 that the Council finally began to engage itself in peacekeeping efforts in the continent. It is our hope that the Council will live up to its Charter obligations and avoid past reluctance and indecisiveness when faced with similar situations in the future. As a current member of the Council, Malaysia will continue to do its part to ensure that the Council establishes a clear criterion for authorizing peacekeeping and enforcement action whenever situations arise, regardless of their geographical locations.

In this regard, we cannot but agree with those who look at the Council's actions vis-à-vis the Democratic Republic of the Congo as being the benchmark for determining the Council's continued commitment to engagement in African conflicts as a whole. The recent adoption of Security Council resolution 1279 (1999) is important in that it would allow the Secretary-General to begin the necessary preparations for the next phase of United Nations involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo presents the Organization with one of its most daunting challenges, given the nature and complexity of the conflict, as well as the country's sheer size. Any peacekeeping mission to be established in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will necessarily have to be substantial and will probably be the biggest operation undertaken in the history of the Organization so far. However, for it to be successful, the mission must be provided with all the necessary financial and logistical assistance from the international community.

It is a truism that there cannot be peace without development. We note that in his progress report the Secretary-General has continued to stress the obvious linkage between the two. It is an undeniable fact that economic and social problems are among the root causes of conflict, and the challenge that awaits the international community is whether we have the ability and, more importantly, the political will to meaningfully address the perennial question of sustaining and enhancing development in Africa. The persistence of poverty impedes efforts for long-term peace and security. The international community must assist the African economies to grow, alleviate the disease, poverty and hunger suffered by millions and encourage the peoples of the affected regions of Africa to fully utilize their potential to provide a better future for their children. We should also endeavour to conceive a concrete strategy that identifies specific measures to be pursued towards meeting that objective.

Political stability is a critical factor in attracting the foreign investment and capital essential for sustained development and growth. In the absence of such conditions, many of the developing countries in Africa will find it impossible to embark upon serious development programmes. The continent still lags behind the target of 6 per cent growth in gross national product per annum, as set by the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

International cooperation and assistance are imperative if Africa is to recover and set its course on the path towards development. Market access is an important factor in efforts to regenerate growth and development in Africa. In the increasingly globalized world we live in today, the continued marginalization of Africa will be further aggravated unless urgent efforts are made to ensure that the African economies are integrated into the global trading regime.

Equally important is the perennial issue of the crippling external debt of the African countries, the servicing of which accounts for a third of their export earnings. Such debts impede public investment in physical infrastructure and human resources. They also impede foreign direct investment. In this regard, we welcome the efforts being made for comprehensive debt relief, including through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative, whereby poor countries with unsustainable debt burdens are provided with coordinated debt relief. My delegation strongly supports the call by the Secretary-General for consideration of converting into grants official bilateral debts owed by the poorest African nations.

We also note with concern the continued decline of official development assistance. This trend has to be reversed if Africa is to recover from its present state. Disappointingly, only a small number of countries have consistently met the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product agreed to at the 1992 Rio Summit. In order to escape the cycle of poverty and debt, Africa urgently needs the world's trade, open economies and foreign investment. Declining official development assistance and minimal foreign investment in the continent are likely to prolong Africa's underdevelopment.

We call on the industrialized countries to arrest the syndrome of donor fatigue for Africa. At the same time, African Governments must give due consideration to a reduction in their defence budgets, in particular that

which relates to arms purchases. The substantial amounts spent on arms purchases should be utilized for more productive purposes. A strong commitment to that objective would generate greater confidence on the part of Africa's external partners with regard to making available badly needed foreign investment and assistance.

At the same time, the importance of the ongoing democratization process, good governance and sustainable development cannot be underscored as prerequisites for durable peace and the promotion of economic growth. We view the initiative by the Organization aimed at confidence-building and promoting common security and development in Africa as a major step in the right direction. Reforms, we believe, would necessarily lead to increased aid. In this connection, my delegation welcomes the proposal by the Secretary-General for the Assembly to establish a working group, as provided for in resolution 53/92, to take stock of the progress made so far in the implementation of the proposals contained in the report on Africa and to consolidate and ensure coherence in efforts to implement these proposals further.

Malaysia greatly values its traditional friendly ties with Africa. We are gratified to see the many positive developments in much of Africa since it rid itself of colonialism, which occurred at about the same time as Malaysia's own independence. We are proud of our long-standing bonds of friendship and cooperation with many African countries and look forward to further consolidating our solidarity with Africa in concrete ways.

In the spirit of South-South cooperation, Malaysia has, since 1981, maintained a Technical Cooperation Programme with our partners in the South. To date, there have been about 4,000 participants, mainly from Africa, who have undergone short- and medium-term training in the public administration and technical fields in Malaysia. We have also developed economic relations with certain African countries based on the concept of "smart partnership" — that is, partnership involving Governments and private sectors with the goal of promoting sound and sustainable economic activities to ensure win-win relationships for all.

In conclusion, my delegation would urge the international community, particularly the developed world, to do more for Africa as it faces up to the challenges of the new century and millennium. The international community will be judged by the actions it takes rather than its declarations of intent. On their part, African countries must manifest the necessary political will to overcome their problems and to put the interests of their peoples first if they are to realize their vast potential.

Ms. Korpi (Finland): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's progress report (S/1999/1008) on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report of last year entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871). The European Union supports the Secretary-General's strong advocacy for development in Africa and his efforts to mobilize the international community in support of these efforts. The European Union emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive follow-up to the Secretary-General's recommendations in all concerned forums and, in this respect, takes positive note of the measures and initiatives already taken.

The European Union welcomes the renewed commitment of the Security Council to contribute to conflict resolution in Africa. We also welcome the Council's determination to improve further its ability to prevent conflicts and to make its responses more efficient and effective. The active preventive diplomacy of the Secretary-General himself is also commended.

The primary responsibility for the future of Africa rests with the African nations, although it is also essential that international support be given. We commend efforts by African leaders and States and the regional and subregional organizations, in particular the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as well as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC); and we call on all of them to intensify and continue these efforts to resolve conflicts and to build peace. Interactive dialogue on continental and subregional security, which rely on existing regional cooperative arrangements, should be further encouraged. The cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in Africa should be enhanced.

The European Union stands ready to continue to assist capacity-building for conflict prevention in Africa. In this context, it adopted a common position on 15 November 1999 to support the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the process towards peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including by contributing to the Joint Military Commission through the OAU. At the same time, we wish to express our support for peace-building measures already taken by the African organizations.

We welcome the adoption by the OAU of its programme for strengthening the conflict management centre, presented to donors in November this year, and call on States to give support in this regard.

The European Union is deeply concerned about the signs, reported by the Secretary-General, that during 1998 and 1999 there was a significant increase in the purchase of arms and munitions by a number of African States.

We attach great importance to preventive disarmament. We have adopted a joint action on small arms and light weapons as a complementary measure to our programme for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in conventional arms. Combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons is also an integral part of our emergency, reconstruction and development programmes.

The European Union strongly believes that in the search for a long-term solution to conflicts in Africa, and in order to limit immediate human suffering, high priority must be given to curbing arms supplies and the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. Full attention should be given to examining measures to suppress the illegal trade in diamonds, gold and other precious materials which are used to pay for those weapons. The European Union encourages the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations to consider using their powers in a more decisive and efficient way to impose and to ensure the implementation of existing arms embargoes. We welcome the adoption of the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Import, Export and Manufacturing of Small Arms, which came into effect in November 1998, and we call upon all States in the region to take all steps to implement this Moratorium, in particular to establish national committees to combat small arms proliferation.

The European Union would like to commend the recent OAU summit for its decision to convene a regional conference on small arms in order to agree on specific recommendations for halting their use, transfer and illegal manufacturing. We also note the positive steps being taken by some African nations to increase public awareness of the dangers of small arms and, in particular, in relation to children. We welcome the Neighbourhood Initiative of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the inclusion of children's concerns in peace agendas.

The European Union believes that the international community should make the most effective use of the instruments at its disposal to address conflicts in Africa. International sanctions, including those mandated by the Security Council, are most effective when targeted on those who bear the primary responsibility for initiating and perpetrating conflicts. Where sanctions are imposed, appropriate humanitarian exemptions should be included from the outset, and the impact of sanctions should be continuously monitored and analysed so that adjustments can be made.

As a consequence of armed conflicts, Africa is suffering from massive displacements of civilian population. Protection of refugees, in particular children and women, is important. The efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Action for the Rights of Children Training Programme, which includes a specific age-gender perspective, are commendable.

We agree with the great concern of the Secretary-General about the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. It is now generally recognized that the efforts to combat the epidemic are impeded by the increase in the number of conflicts in Africa. The European Union fully supports the efforts by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other sponsors of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), including within the context of the international partnership against AIDS in Africa, to be launched in May 2000 to address this problem within the overall framework of population and development and of public health. In view of the fact that HIV-positive women and girls already outnumber men in Africa, the European Union welcomes the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) African Girls' Education Initiative as a priority component of the global girls' education programme. The Programme of Action for the Decade of Education by the African Ministers of Education and the OAU summit in Algiers also acknowledged the need for education about HIV/AIDS. Knowledge is and will remain the best preventive method against this deadly disease.

The boundary between humanitarian crises and the development situation is not easy to define, and therefore, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee has recommended that those selected for resident coordinator posts also have the required skills to fulfil the functions of humanitarian coordinators in African countries facing humanitarian challenges. This linkage between relief and development was particularly emphasized at the 1999 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in its humanitarian segment. Likewise, in the operational activities segment a greater coherence and linkage between the consolidated appeals process and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework was emphasized. Close cooperation between these two systems could be conducive to joint planning.

The Secretary-General's progress report points out clearly the positive relation between good governance practices and the consolidation of peace and democratic processes and national reconciliation efforts. The European Union acknowledges the many initiatives taken by several United Nations and other international organizations towards enhancing the regional and country-level capacities of respective organizations and Governments with regard to human rights action plans.

The Secretary-General rightly points out the need to rethink international aid and to intensify international efforts for more effective and efficient debt relief measures. These aspects have been dealt with extensively under appropriate agenda items in the Second Committee, and in this connection the European Union would like to express general support for the ideas expressed by the Secretary-General. We would also like to note the several new initiatives adopted by the international community to bring deeper, broader and faster debt relief to the heavily indebted poor countries.

Development needs economic activity and growth. As so well pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General, the creation of a positive environment for investment and for better competitiveness is crucial. Opportunities offered by Africa should be made known to investors.

Investments also require human resources. The efforts made by the United Nations, within the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative, are important, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa, in which the lowest rate of primary school enrolment and extremely low female literacy rates are registered. The Programme of Action of the Decade of Education adopted by the African Ministers of Education, endorsed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Algiers, is commendable, in particular as it places special emphasis on the education of the girl child, child soldiers, refugees and displaced children.

Sustainable development and overcoming poverty require, among other things, social justice and employment opportunities. The European Union notes the positive initiatives taken by the Economic Commission for Africa in preparing the report "Status of women in Africa, 1998" with the aim of implementing the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and the Beijing Platform for Action.

We welcome the favourable response from the OAU to the European Union's proposal for the holding in April 2000 of a summit of Heads of State or Government of the European Union and of Africa. We have started the preparations for the summit, which should adopt a balanced approach between political and economic issues reflecting the global nature of the European Union-Africa partnership in order to ensure concrete results.

Building on the long-term cooperation and relationship between the European Union and African countries, we are prepared to continue to strengthen our forward-looking partnership with Africa, with a view to ensuring peace and stability; the promotion of and respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance; combating poverty; promoting social and human development; securing sustained development and economic growth; increasing economic activities; protecting the environment; and enhancing cultural exchanges.

Finally, we would like to pay special tribute to African countries, organizations and statesmen that are making untiring efforts for peacemaking at continental and regional levels. We would also like to call for early implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Widodo (Indonesia): Our deliberations in the Assembly today on agenda item 46 reflect the continuing significance that the international community accords to issues concerning the continent of Africa.

Let me first express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his series of reports concerning Africa, including his report in document A/54/133, entitled "Development of Africa: implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council and the General Assembly,

specifically the implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on Africa". This report facilitated the discussion during the coordination segment of the 1999 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and provided a unique opportunity to take stock of achievements and progress made by the people of Africa, while also focusing attention on the need for enhanced international cooperation for the establishment of a partnership between that continent with the rest of the world based on mutual benefit and prosperity.

Today, at the threshold of the new millennium, Africa is closer to attaining its goals of stable peace and economic prosperity. It is gratifying to note that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations in Africa are playing an increasingly important role in the resolution of conflicts. However, this should not relieve the relevant body of the United Nations of its obligation under the Charter for the maintenance of peace and security. In this regard, the appointment of special envoys and representatives of the Secretary-General, meetings of contact groups and special conferences on Africa have further bolstered the search to identify the sources of conflicts and to increase the possibility of attaining viable settlements.

The question of peace and security in Africa is intrinsically linked with economic growth and development. We fully agree with the Secretary-General in his progress report (S/1999/1008) to the Security Council of 25 September 1999 that conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building are meaningless unless they enable a society to develop. It would be most beneficial if that report of the Secretary-General to the Council could also be distributed as a General Assembly document, since it touches upon the issues of development.

The past decade has been a mixed one, with Africa at times registering virtual economic stagnation and at other times only modest progress. And Africa still faces horrendous development constraints. In this context, the Secretary-General's report has put forward recommendations on a number of core issues on which progress must be achieved. While some efforts have shown results, as indicated in the Secretary-General's reports on Africa, others, such as the endeavour to increase market access for African exports in the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Lomé Convention, still need to be pursued.

Likewise, financial flows, particularly multilateral financial flows for development in Africa, have been negatively affected by globalization. Since only a very small percentage of foreign direct investment flows to Africa, many African countries that are unable to tap into such flows run the risk of being further marginalized.

The matter of external indebtedness if closely associated with appropriate development financing and is an unbearable constraint on revitalizing African growth and development. Despite the many initiatives undertaken, particularly the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative, Africa's debt stock continues to increase. In this regard, we look forward to the implementation of the recent Cologne debt initiative adopted by the Group of Eight in June this year, which is a significant step towards cutting the debt burden of some of the world's poorest.

While such debt relief and cancellation initiatives are critically needed, they form only part of a much-needed overall integrated strategy to ensure a return to sustained growth and sustainable development. In this regard, Indonesia supports the call from the OAU for an international agreement to clear the entire debt stock of the poorest countries in Africa. This would greatly help revitalize the economic performance of these countries and put them back on the path of development. Likewise, we see merit in the proposal for creditor countries to convert the remaining official bilateral debt of the poorest African countries into grants.

Furthermore, in the endeavour to maintain credible economic growth and social development, particularly in Africa, the World Summit for Social Development called, *inter alia*, for action to achieve the goal of full employment by implementing appropriate economic and social policies aimed at attaining sustainable livelihood through freely chosen productive employment methods.

If the international community is committed to these objectives, aid in all forms should be given to improve the health-care needs of the African people. Moreover, efforts to combat illiteracy on the continent are to be commended, for these measures constitute the driving force of development.

In this light, therefore, greater efforts should be made by the international community, equal to those it has made in other parts of the world, to redress and seek solutions to the problems of Africa.

Finally, in the context of a new dialogue and partnership between the international community and the African continent, Indonesia remains firmly committed to assisting its partners in Africa in achieving their vision of a peaceful and prosperous Africa. That support has been consistently reflected in Indonesia's support of Africa's objectives through our active participation in many international and regional forums, including our participation in various peacekeeping operations and in South-South cooperation, as well as through the strong bilateral relations that Indonesia maintains throughout the continent.

Mr. Mmualefe (Botswana): Last year we welcomed with open hearts and much optimism the report (A/52/871) of the Secretary-General on the subject of causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We did so out of our sincere appreciation for the comprehensive manner in which the Secretary-General approached this important subject. We wish to state here our continued desire to see the United Nations move along that path.

While the prevention and management of conflicts and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa are indeed our responsibility as Africans, we also wish to point out that it is a responsibility that has to be shared with other members of the international community. As a delegation, however, we have always held the view that as we exhort others to come to our aid, we should also do our utmost as Africans to put our house in order so that the help we receive can be put to better use.

We will be the first to admit that efforts aimed at attaining durable peace and sustainable development in our continent will come to naught if they continue to be disrupted by armed conflicts. Thus, we need to tread the path we set for ourselves in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and through subregional organizations to settle disputes through peaceful means. As African countries, we need not shy away from seeking mediation where disputes appear to be taking a turn for the worse — that is, towards armed conflict.

Lack of tolerance within our borders born out of ethnic rivalry and antipathy or hostility is one of the major sources of conflict in Africa. It thus behoves us as Africans to continuously work harder at building societies wherein our diversity is appreciated as an enriching phenomenon rather than being considered an element for the promotion of the narrow interests of one group at the expense of another.

Furthermore, the current pace of establishing a culture of transparency and accountable governance in most parts of the continent needs to be maintained. The understandings reached and decisions made at Algiers during the recent OAU summit are good signs in this regard. Governance that is rampant with corruption and unaccountable to the masses of our people has too often led to the wasting of the resources necessary for the economic development of our countries and the attendant societal instability.

I stated earlier that as Africans we should be the first to take responsibility for the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development. We also look forward to concrete assistance from the international community. We cannot fail to note that in spite of our commitment as countries to reorganize and restructure our economies, we are continuously faced with the serious deterioration of the terms of trade, declining official development assistance, the low level of the flow of foreign direct investment, the crushing debt burden and the lack of sufficient access for important African goods, such as agricultural products, textiles, clothing and leather products, to the markets of developed countries.

In our view, and, indeed, as is recognized in this body, better terms of trade and increased flows of foreign direct investment are necessary for the economic uplifting of Africa. As Africans, we have liberalized our economies in order to improve our efficiency and maximize opportunities for investors, and this liberalization will be meaningful and sustainable only if it is matched by appropriate flows of foreign direct investment. We wish to encourage our development partners and the various international organizations — such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Bank — to continue in their efforts aimed at publicizing investment opportunities in Africa and building capacities of African institutions dealing with trade and investment.

Better access to the markets of developed countries for African goods through the lowering and removal of tariffs is also paramount. This is particularly so because better returns for our exports will enable us to generate the resources that are vital for sustained economic growth. The sustained growth of our economies is also in

the interest of the industrialized countries, since the opportunities it creates could enable our Governments to spread social services more equitably, thus creating an environment conducive to the maintenance of peace.

The crushing levels of debt and the costs attendant to its servicing is another serious obstacle faced by African countries. While we appreciate various initiatives at the multilateral and bilateral levels aimed at reducing the debts of heavily indebted poor countries, we wish to add our voice to those that have expressed the desire for there to be more debt cancellation. The amounts used for debt servicing do indeed take a heavy toll on a country's resources and also on its ability to adequately provide necessary social services, such as education and health.

In addition to the crushing debt burden, developing countries, particularly those in Africa, are faced with ever-decreasing levels of official development assistance. While the need for increased foreign direct investment remains paramount, we also wish to point out that our developed partners should continue to assist us and reverse the current trend of the decline in official development assistance. As most of our economies have been and continue to be restructured, we cannot fail to underline the fact that assistance will continue to be required.

The situation of refugees and displaced persons in Africa also remains a big challenge to our efforts for durable peace and sustainable development. Not only are great numbers of these people deprived of a dignified existence, but their situation also puts a burden on host countries. We appeal to the Member States of this body not only to increase the resources necessary for the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees but also to continue extending their assistance to host countries.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, and continued assistance by the international community to the latter, are also essential to the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We are glad that this morning the General Assembly was able to adopt a resolution in this regard.

The prevalence of illicit traffic in small arms in Africa is also a challenge to the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in the continent. It is our hope that the upcoming conference on illicit traffic in small arms in all its aspects will be not just a place to talk shop but an opportunity that will be exploited so that we can come up with concrete measures to stem the tide. In the meantime, we wish to appeal to arms-producing countries to put in place mechanisms which will ensure that arms dealers sell only to legitimate buyers. Efforts by the Secretariat aimed at addressing this problem will enjoy the support of our delegation.

Let me conclude by saying that as Africans, we should, and do, recognize our responsibility to promote durable peace and sustainable development on our own continent. However, of necessity, our efforts should be accompanied by an equal commitment by other members of the international community to facilitate and assist.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.

United Nations A/54/PV.75

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-fourth session

75th plenary meeting
Thursday, 9 December 1999, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Stanislaus (Grenada), Vice-President, took the chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 3

Credentials of representatives to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly

Second report of the Credentials Committee (A/54/475/Add.1)

The Acting President: The draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 10 of its second report reads as follows:

"*The General Assembly*,

Having considered the second report of the Credentials Committee and the recommendation contained therein,

Approves the second report of the Credentials Committee."

We shall now take action on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee set forth in paragraph 10 of the report.

The Credentials Committee adopted this draft resolution without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/6 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 3.

Agenda item 54

Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the aerial and naval military attack against the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the present United States Administration in April 1986

The Acting President: It is my understanding that, after the necessary consultations, consideration of this item may be deferred to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of the item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 54.

00-26100 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Agenda item 55

Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security

The Acting President: It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 55.

Agenda item 56

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

The Acting President: It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 56.

Agenda item 57

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

The Acting President: It is my understanding that there is no request to consider this item at the present session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 57.

Agenda item 58

Launching of global negotiations on international economic cooperation for development

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the Assembly's wish to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 58.

Agenda item 28

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/168)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.55)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Azerbaijan to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.55.

Mr. Kouliev (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, allow me to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/54/168, prepared in response to paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 53/15, dated 29 October 1998. This report gives an overview of the state of cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and various institutions of the United Nations system for the period 1998-1999.

The Republic of Azerbaijan attaches great importance to the development of regional cooperation within the framework of the ECO. Since its enlargement in 1992, following the accession of seven new member States, the ECO has become stronger and more dynamic,

and it has enhanced its image and prestige in the international arena.

Being by its goals and tasks a purely economic organization, the ECO is directing its efforts towards the development of cooperation of its member countries in priority economic areas, such as transport, trade, energy and telecommunications. A great deal of work is being carried out within the organization in the preparation and conclusion of further international agreements in this field, the purpose of which is to harmonize the respective national legislation of the member States.

World experience has shown that the effective development of cooperation among the countries in the field of transport has a positive influence on the overall integration processes in the region. In this respect, the ECO region, with its internal potential, rich natural and labour resources and geopolitical location, linking Europe and Asia, possesses real potential and provides incentives for the dynamic development of the transport sector, with a view to upgrading it to a level corresponding to international requirements. In this respect, I would like to mention the signing of a transit transport framework agreement by the ECO member States in May 1998. The entry into force of this Agreement will give further impetus to the development of intraregional trade and will open up additional opportunities for the creation of a favourable environment in the ECO region for the development of cooperation in industry, tourism and other economic fields.

I would also like to note that some of the ECO member States, which for centuries have been located at trade crossroads, are today parties to another major project for the restoration of the Great Silk Route. The relevant multilateral agreement was signed during the high-level international conference held in September 1997 in Baku. The implementation of this agreement will create a reliable basis for the development of the natural resources of the countries lying along the Europe-Caucasus-Asia transport corridor; it will also lead to more effective utilization of their economic potential and the expansion of trade and economic cooperation and will facilitate their further integration into the world economy.

The abundance of energy resources, including hydrocarbons, in the ECO region, presupposes the development of active cooperation in the fields of prospecting, production and transport. Such cooperation is already going on within the framework of two ECO expert working groups that are focusing their work on feasibility studies on electrical power and the construction of oil and gas pipelines in the region. Cooperation within the organization is being complemented by the active bilateral cooperation of the member States concerned.

I regret to note that the ECO region is vulnerable to the illegal production and trafficking of drugs, as well as to money laundering. This damages the image of the entire region. The cooperation of member States in the fight against this evil is on the agenda today. In this regard, I would like to stress the importance of a project on the establishment of a drug control coordination unit in the ECO secretariat, which is being carried out with the assistance and support of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). The relevant agreement was signed between the ECO and UNDCP in October 1998. The creation of this unit will enhance coordination and cooperation among the ECO member States in the prevention of illicit drug trafficking in the region and will make it possible to compile necessary information and to make it available to the respective competent authorities of the ECO member countries concerned, thus enhancing their mutual awareness.

The ECO is actively developing cooperation among its member States in other areas as well, particularly in the humanitarian and cultural fields. In this respect, the establishment of the ECO Cultural Institute is a major achievement. The ECO Educational Institute and the ECO Science Foundation are also in the process of being set up.

Today, with the cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a project entitled "Capacity-building of the ECO secretariat", envisaging the provision of consultancy services, technical assistance, including the training of personnel, and access to information technologies and the technical equipment of the ECO secretariat, is currently under way. The successful implementation of this project will substantially broaden and strengthen the potential of the ECO secretariat and will contribute to the ongoing efforts relating to the sustainable development of the human resources of the member countries.

The ECO is dynamically developing its relations with other international organizations. Thus, relations between the ECO and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have developed further since the ECO obtained observer status in the WTO in March 1999. Furthermore, the ECO delegation attended, in the capacity of observer, the WTO Ministerial Meeting held in Seattle last week.

Relations between the ECO and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are becoming stronger. Meetings of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the two organizations during the annual sessions of the General Assembly have already become traditional. The last such meeting was held this year on September 29 in New York. An extensive exchange of opinions on the development of interregional and intraregional relations, the stabilization and strengthening of domestic markets, exchange of information and other issues of mutual interest took place. This was done in the interest of opening up and fully utilizing the vast potential of both regions for the benefit of their peoples.

A few weeks ago, the ECO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) signed a memorandum on cooperation. Delegations of the ECO participated in various meetings of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and held meetings at the headquarters of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) to discuss the possibilities for the establishment of fruitful mutual cooperation.

An additional impetus to the further development of the Organization in all areas of cooperation was provided by the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the ECO that was held in Baku in May 1998. The Baku communiqué adopted at that meeting includes concrete guidelines and priorities for future joint activities of the member countries and will serve as a good basis for the organization as it enters the next millennium.

In conclusion, I would like to express my confidence that through joint efforts, and in close and fruitful cooperation with the institutions of the United Nations, the ECO member States will be able to raise mutual cooperation to a level corresponding to their potential, to their requirements for development and to the aspirations of their peoples. That would facilitate the smooth integration of our countries into the world economic system.

Allow me now, on behalf of the 10 States members of Economic Cooperation Organization, to present draft resolution A/54/L.55, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization". Reflecting the ECO's adherence to the development of regional cooperation and summarizing the results achieved in the field of cooperation between the ECO and the United Nations system as a whole, the draft also describes prospects for enhancing this cooperation. On behalf of all the sponsors of the draft resolution, I call upon the General Assembly to adopt it by consensus.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization, and also to extend my sincere appreciation to Mr. Onder Ozar, Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and his colleagues for their endeavours to strengthen the secretariat of the ECO and to expand constructive cooperation, particularly in new areas, with regional, multilateral and international bodies and organizations and, more importantly, with the United Nations system.

The process of globalization, whose various aspects include the increased mobility of factors of production, goods and services across borders, the emergence of a global market and the flourishing of new and innovative technologies, particularly information technologies, seems to be an undeniable fact of our collective life. It is a process which makes itself felt in different arenas of the national life of all societies. This process traverses national boundaries in economy, technology and culture and is fragmenting production processes, the labour market, political entities and societies.

Powerful transnational forces are reshaping the key features of the world market and are deepening the mutual interdependence of societies. In such a global environment, where the real world is perceived as increasingly borderless, countries should establish the necessary institutional frameworks to benefit from the opportunities of this process while avoiding the serious associated risks, including marginalization. No country can face the resulting challenges of this process without the necessary preparations for integration in the world economy.

The creation of regional economic groupings is an approach by developing countries to integrate themselves smoothly into the world economy. To be effective at the international level, policy response to globalization should be both comprehensive and coherent. Establishing and strengthening regional arrangements in the area of trade and finance through various means, including by lowering tariffs and other trade barriers and eliminating impediments to capital flow in the regional grouping arrangements, will assist developing countries to enhance their capacities for integration in the world economy and

for addressing existing and future challenges resulting from globalization.

The geographical position of the ECO region, and its economic potential, particularly oil and gas reserves and the rich mineral resources in the area, provide all the ingredients for a sound industrial base and strong economic relations with other neighbouring countries and regional economic groupings. There is also considerable agricultural potential in the vast lands accommodating both livestock and grain production. However, political, economic, social and environmental challenges in the region are also enormous.

All new members of the ECO are at the stage of transition from central planning to market-oriented economies. Since these States are also landlocked, strengthening the transit infrastructure at the regional level is urgently needed for expanding trade, increasing investment opportunities and their integration into the world economy. The free flow of oil and gas from the area to the world market can play a significant role in the overall development of the producing States in the region and could potentially reinvigorate ECO as a viable partner in the world economy. It would seem difficult to argue that the transit of oil and gas from this region to the world market on the basis of any consideration other than economic feasibility and environmental reasons would serve the interest of the region or would confirm the commitment to a free market economy.

Protection of the environment, in particular in the Caspian Sea, the Aral Sea and some other regions in Central Asia, is among the major challenges facing littoral States and concerned countries of the organization. The ECO region also continues to be one of the most vulnerable regions for the illicit cultivation, production, trafficking and consumption of narcotic drugs. Furthermore, the region is one of the geographical areas most prone to natural disasters, particularly earthquakes, which have already inflicted tremendous human casualties and a devastating impact on the socio-economic infrastructure of countries of the region.

The major goals and objectives of ECO are the establishment of common institutions for the smooth movement of goods and capital among its Member States through, *inter alia*, the removal of trade barriers within the ECO region, the expansion of intraregional and interregional trade and ensuring the gradual integration of the economies of the ECO member States into the world economy and their participation in the globalization process.

The ECO secretariat has been focusing its work on finding the necessary means at the regional and international levels, particularly through technical assistance from United Nations bodies, funds and programmes, to facilitate ECO members' participation in the international economy, and also on the expansion of regional cooperation and coordination to address common socio-economic challenges and problems at the regional level.

The ECO has been expanding its relations with other regional economic groupings with the objective of benefiting from their experiences and expanding intraregional trade and investment. Establishing and strengthening close contacts with other regional organizations; carrying out exchanges of senior officials and experts in various sectors; participating in technical meetings and workshops; holding joint topical seminars and workshops with other organizations; exchanging experiences and information on policy-making for deregulation and harmonization of regulatory frameworks for trade and investment; encouraging and facilitating contacts between private sectors and chambers of commerce; and convening joint ministerial meetings with other regional organizations are important steps being taken by the ECO to strengthen cooperation with other regional organizations.

We welcome the growing joint programmes between the ECO and the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme. At the same time, we believe there still exist ample opportunities for expansion of such cooperation, and we are confident that we can jointly explore and operationalize the new areas of cooperation.

I cannot conclude without referring to the menace of the illicit cultivation, consumption and trafficking of narcotics in the region. We believe that strong support from the international community in all areas, as well as intensive regional cooperation to combat this hazardous problem and to constrain the transit of narcotic drugs, is vital not only for the socio-economic well-being of the region but also for that of other countries, particularly in Europe. The establishment of a drug control coordination unit in the ECO is a positive step towards the realization of this objective.

In this context, cooperation among the ECO and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and other intergovernmental, international and regional organizations is imperative, especially through supporting the efforts of the transit countries to halt the flow and trafficking of illicit drugs to consuming countries. Combating drug trafficking will be successful if resources are made available to operationalize various programmes jointly developed by ECO and United Nations bodies. Hence, the financial burden associated with the programmes to stop the cultivation, production, trafficking and consumption must be shared by all concerned.

Let me close by expressing in advance our gratitude for the adoption of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization. It is hoped that it will be adopted by a unanimous decision of the Assembly.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.55.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.55?

Draft resolution A/54/L.55 was adopted (resolution 54/100).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the United States of America, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gallagher (United States of America): The United States interprets paragraph 8 of the resolution just adopted as encouraging contacts between the international financial institutions and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) secretariat, an action that we welcome. However, in many cases specific international financial institutions have not yet decided on what constitutes appropriate relations with individual ECO member States. We believe the General Assembly should not interject itself into issues as contentious as these.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 28?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 46 *(continued)*

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/133)

Letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/54/513)

Mr. Estreme (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for Argentina, and for me personally, to intervene in this debate.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report of 14 June 1999 on development in Africa.

As the Secretary-General has stated, despite the efforts being carried out by most African countries to strengthen their democratic institutions, promote human rights and reform their economies, the situation in recent years has not been the best. Growth in the economies of most countries of the region has dropped, as the servicing of their foreign debt continues to deprive the countries of the continent of resources that could be used for development. To this we must add the persistence of violence in many parts of Africa, along with the terrible humanitarian implications.

In our statement yesterday on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), we said that in order to achieve lasting peace in Africa the minimum conditions for development had to be created in order to overcome the causes of conflicts and to deal with their humanitarian consequences. We pointed out that this task requires the support of the international community, and in particular that of the various agencies of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

In order to coordinate these tasks it is of the utmost importance to carry out a follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations set out by the Secretary-General in his report of 14 April 1998 (A/52/871) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Last September, the Security Council examined the

elements associated with peace and security set out in that report. As the Secretary-General summarized in the current report on development in Africa, it seems essential to us today to examine the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations in the areas of strengthening good governance, social development, eliminating discrimination against women, increasing trade and promoting capital investment and regional integration.

Without going into details, we would like to say that the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which was adopted by the Assembly in December 1991, outlines priority areas for these various initiatives. Among them we would like to highlight the adoption of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution by the Organization of African Unity, and the adoption in 1995 of the Cairo Agenda for the economic and social development of Africa.

Within its ability, Argentina has worked with Africa in some of these areas — whether in humanitarian activities, such as mine clearance and sending food aid, or by carrying out technical cooperation programmes in such diverse areas as agricultural development, human resources training and promoting good governance. This is all being carried out through a special programme known as the Argentine Fund for Horizontal Cooperation (FOAR).

Allow me to conclude by indicating once again that it is only by eliminating the underlying causes of conflict in Africa, which are essentially poverty and marginalization, that we will be able to lay the foundations for a lasting peace. The Africans themselves must take the lead with initiative and creativity. Fortunately, these qualities have been in evidence in the recent efforts undertaken by regional and subregional organizations on the continent.

The international community must also continue to provide assistance in this process. We believe that in this respect key tools will be provided by the guidelines set out by the Secretary-General in the documents mentioned earlier, which will require sustained and careful follow-up.

Mr. Suh (Republic of Korea): Allow me first to express my delegation's appreciation for the Secretary-General's report on the development of Africa and for his progress report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his April 1998 report on Africa. My delegation notes the substantial progress made by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, as well as by the entire United Nations system, in implementing the Secretary-General's recommendations. We fully share the Secretary-General's view that Africa's challenges require a comprehensive and integrated approach. The States Members of the United Nations should not only continue to make individual efforts, but also pool new resources and determination into an integrated initiative.

During the past several years, there has been a great deal of success in eradicating poverty and famine, advancing education, controlling disease and meeting emergency and humanitarian needs in many parts of Africa. Yet the international community can and must do more. For one, the successful implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa will require efficient coordination and clear mandates for the relevant agencies. Moreover, we must enhance our efforts to harmonize various international and bilateral initiatives on African development to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

On the political front, many African countries have met with notable success in recent years. In the key States of South Africa, Nigeria and the Central African Republic, democratically elected leaders have taken office. I am certain that these developments will generate positive momentum towards the advancement of democracy across the continent. These new leaders now join many other Africans in advocating democracy and good governance as the foundations of peace and development on the continent. We appreciate in particular President Bouteflika of Algeria, the current Chairman of the Organization for African Unity (OAU), and Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the OAU, for their able leadership and indispensable roles in promoting peace and development in Africa.

Important progress has also been made in some of the most intractable conflict situations on the continent. In both Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the international community, together with the parties themselves, has worked diligently to achieve peace agreements. We must continue to build on these hard-won achievements until we secure lasting peace and stability for the entire region.

Allow me now to touch upon several points to which my delegation attaches great importance.

First, we share the conviction of the Secretary-General that democracy and good governance, along with sustainable development, are fundamental to long-term peace and prosperity in Africa. Our own experience with

the development process illustrates that good governance, underpinned by democracy and respect for human rights and buttressed by free-market principles, best ensures peace, stability and prosperity in the long run. We commend the numerous strides already made in this regard in Africa, as described in the Secretary-General's report. The international community should continue to work in intimate collaboration with African countries with a view to further enhancing their capacity for democracy, good governance and sustainable development.

Secondly, it should be noted that technical assistance and exchange can play an enormously beneficial role in increasing potential for development on the African continent. In this context, I should like to stress the need to elaborate on the substantial implementation of the results of the Geneva High-level Meeting on the least developed countries in 1997. For our part, my Government, in cooperation with the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, hosted a Forum on Asia-Africa Cooperation in Export Promotion from 14 to 16 December 1998 in Seoul. In coordination with the United Nations Development Programme, my Government will also be hosting from 31 January to 3 February 2000 in Seoul a High-level Forum on South-South Cooperation in Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the Twenty-first Century. We believe that further South-South cooperation of this sort holds enormous potential.

Furthermore, the Government of the Republic of Korea allocated $2.3 million in the form of projects, procurements, development surveys, invitation of trainees and dispatch of experts to 23 African countries last year alone. As it is our view that information technology holds rich promise for developing countries, we have also supported the establishment of a United Nations Technology Centre for Africa and Internet access for the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) through the Korea-ECA Cooperation Fund. This fund, established in 1995, had already contributed over $1 million to Africa by 1998.

Thirdly, our delegation would like to reiterate the importance of stability and peace. In this context, we wish to underline that efforts to prevent conflicts are urgently needed in Africa. Given the number of potentially combustible situations, there is an urgent need to build up the capacity to prevent conflicts through early warning and pre-emptive action. Post-conflict peace-building support structures in Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and other countries, as aptly described in the Secretary-General's progress report, can certainly serve as models for conflict prevention i these and other areas of potential conflict.

We believe that the Secretary-General's Trust Fun for Preventive Action is a useful mechanism to enhanc the capabilities of the United Nations in conflic prevention in Africa and elsewhere. My Government ha contributed annually to the Trust Fund since its inceptio in 1997, and we call upon other Member States who hav not done so to make their financial resources available t the Secretary-General for this purpose.

Finally, my delegation believes that rapid respons is crucial for containing deadly conflict and its tragi humanitarian consequences. Certainly, African countrie themselves must take additional steps to enhance the own peacekeeping capacity. Yet the internationa community can help as well. Along these lines, w support the measures undertaken by the United Natio to upgrade Africa's peacekeeping capacity, including sta exchange programmes between the United Nations an the OAU, United Nations-led training assistance fo African peacekeepers and coordination with the Economi Community of West African States, among other effort We share the concern of the Secretary-General about ho best to provide logistical support to African troop involved in peacekeeping operations, particularly in th early stages of conflict. In our view, it is necessary t explore the possibility of establishing standb arrangements for such support.

My Government has always accorded high priorit to the maintenance of amicable ties, cooperatio solidarity and partnership with African countries. Th Republic of Korea has participated in, among othe activities, electoral assistance missions in South Afric and Mozambique, and we have sent peacekeepers t Somalia, Angola and Western Sahara. We hav consistently supported cooperative development initiativ in Africa, particularly in capacity-building. My delegatio takes this opportunity to renew my Government commitment to the efforts of the United Nations, th OAU and African countries in support of peace an prosperity on the African continent.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway welcomes th opportunity to discuss the complementary issues promoting durable peace and fostering sustainab development in Africa. We would like to thank th Secretary-General for his report, which provides a goo basis for our discussion.

Descriptions of the situation in Africa tend to be sombre, often painting a gloomy picture of a conflict-ridden continent with significant social and economic problems. However, such a picture is far from complete and tends to obscure the progress being made in many parts of Africa. Positive developments include the demise of apartheid in South Africa, the restoration of a peaceful Mali, the recent democratization of the Government of Nigeria and the long and difficult path from civil war to elections in Mozambique.

However, the challenges facing the African countries are significant. The World Bank's latest *Global Economic Prospects* report presents a grim picture of limited economic growth and poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa. Today, that region has the largest share of people living on less than $1 a day. Present growth rates are too low to reduce the number of poor people, in large part due to conflict, lack of international support and recent climatic conditions.

It is imperative that African countries and the international community counter this trend through building partnerships aimed at reversing the negative trend in development assistance, increasing foreign direct investment and making more effective use of resources. Norway will contribute to this end by maintaining the level of its assistance at 0.89 per cent of gross national product in 2000. During the first years of the new millennium the intention is to gradually increase this level to 1 per cent. At the same time, Norway is aiming at increasing the level of its bilateral assistance to Africa to 50 per cent of the total aid budget. Norway also supports the international initiatives to make development assistance more effective in poverty reduction and to help focus national development strategies on this crucial challenge.

The heavy debt burden of many African countries also needs to be alleviated. We encourage all creditor countries to seek ways to give the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) a new start at the turn of the millennium, urging countries that lag behind to contribute their share of HIPC financing. Norway is prepared to contribute its share, and has already declared that it is ready to cancel 100 per cent of commercial claims on HIPC countries. Regarding debt relief, Norway will give priority to 22 countries, of which 18 are in Africa.

Turning to security issues, it is our view that the United Nations is the Organization best suited to lead and coordinate complex multifunctional peace operations. The Organization is unique in its ability to make use of a combination of various security policy instruments. The United Nations will, however, often need to draw on strong regional or subregional organizations when large military forces with peace-building capabilities are called for. A recent example of this is the cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States in the peace operation in Sierra Leone. Regional organizations can more readily mobilize the standing forces of their members and merge them into a single force. It is therefore important to strengthen the regional capacity for participation in peace operations.

Furthermore, the United Nations should work closely with the relevant regional organizations in order to establish common principles for training personnel and units intended for participation in peace operations. It is also important to establish common organizational structures for interaction between the United Nations and the relevant regional organizations and to improve effective multifunctional planning and coordination. In order to realize these important aims, those member countries with greater financial resources and extensive experience of peace operations should provide funding and personnel to establish a self-sustaining peacekeeping capacity within the regional security organizations.

Norway has been very active in this regard, particularly in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region through a programme called Training for Peace in Southern Africa. The scope of the programme is to organize courses for civilian police and military officers selected for possible service in peacekeeping operations. The programme will initially run for 5 years, and Norway has sponsored it with approximately $2.5 million. Since its start in 1995, Training for Peace has conducted national courses and regional seminars on peacekeeping operations in 11 SADC countries, with the participation of more than 600 persons.

The conflicts of the last decade have shown us that in order to create peace, it is not enough merely to stop the actual fighting. If a ceasefire is to become a sustainable peace, it is important that the international community help rebuild viable administrative structures and civil society. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are important elements in this regard. Norway financially supports such initiatives as the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Sierra Leone.

The presence of large numbers of small arms and light weapons is a major destabilizing factor in a post-conflict environment. These weapons undermine the security of war-affected populations and threaten the safety of international peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel. Norway has played an active role in a pilot project in this area with its support for efforts to achieve a moratorium on small arms in West Africa.

Anti-personnel mines constitute another serious obstacle to post-conflict reconstruction. We have urged all countries Members of the United Nations to sign and ratify the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We also emphasize the need for adequate resources for mine-clearance activities. Norway has already stated its intention to contribute $120 million over five years for this purpose.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that Africa is not a poor continent. The opposite is true. Africa has over the centuries been rich in human and natural resources. The efforts of African countries to meet the twin challenges of building peace and of achieving development deserve the active support of the international community, in a partnership where the United Nations should continue to be in the forefront. Norway will continue to do its utmost to contribute to reaching these goals.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): Poverty and conflicts are the two major problems that have been hampering the development of many countries in Africa. They also pose serious threats to human security — that is to security in the life and dignity of communities and their members — in many parts of the continent. And we all know that women and children are always the first to suffer. It therefore goes without saying that sustainable development and conflict prevention are essential for bettering the lives of the peoples of Africa.

Yet the problems involved are difficult to solve. Both poverty and conflict are deeply rooted in the history of the countries and communities concerned. And, as has been often pointed out, the two issues are so interrelated that they create a vicious circle in which the recurrence of conflict makes poverty worse and in which poverty makes post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation more difficult.

The task of preventing the occurrence and recurrence of conflicts is vast, ranging from diplomatic efforts to make peace, military efforts to keep peace and political efforts for reconciliation to such activities as the protection and repatriation of refugees and displaced persons, mine-clearance, the imposition of controls on the illicit trade i small arms, the reintegration into society of demobilize ex-soldiers and the rehabilitation and reconstruction societies.

The task of making progress in economic and socia development in the African countries concerned is equall vast and complex, although I do not intend to repeat th list of problems that are already well known.

As has been acknowledged, responsibility for bot peacemaking and economic development rests first an foremost with the countries concerned, albeit in differen contexts. But it is equally evident that these efforts shoul be supported by strong international cooperation at th regional and the global levels. Obviously, the ways i which outside countries and international organization provide such cooperation will vary from case to case. I particular, the way in which we should assist in conflic prevention differs from the way in which we should hel with economic development. For example, the Unite Nations, and the Security Council in particular, must pla a leading role in conflict prevention, while th commitment of donor countries is critically important fo economic development.

It is not my intention today to dwell on what m country has been doing to help African countries. I jus want, however, to take this opportunity to speak briefl about the most recent case of follow-up to the Secon Tokyo International Conference on African Development the Asia-Africa Business Forum, held at Kuala Lumpu in October in collaboration with the United Nation Development Programme and the Government Malaysia. The purpose of the Forum was to promot trade and investment between African and Asian busines enterprises. It turned out that 149 private Africa companies and 129 Asian companies participated in th event, and that the negotiations among them have alread produced $2.45 million worth of contracts. Mor contracts are expected in the coming months, of course

The United Nations has a core catalytic role to pla in the process of ensuring peace and prosperity for th peoples of Africa. It is the responsibility of all Membe States to make sure that the United Nations plays tha role properly and efficiently. Japan for its part is firml committed to working together with other Member State towards the common goal of realizing durable peace an sustainable development in Africa.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Since the submission of his 1998 report (A/52/871) entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", the Secretary-General has this year submitted a progress report on follow-up (A/54/133), which contains information on work and achievements in the implementation by relevant bodies of the United Nations system of recommendations in a number of fields. The report is rich in content and contains thorough analysis. It is very helpful to our discussion, and I wish to commend the Secretary-General and the relevant United Nations bodies for the efforts they have made in resolving African issues.

Over the past year or so, the African continent has on the whole maintained stability and has enjoyed some economic growth. Positive momentum has emerged for the political settlement of issues such as Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The successful convening of the thirty-fifth ordinary session and the fourth extraordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) reflects the shared aspirations of African countries for unity and for rebirth.

At the same time, however, we cannot fail to see that the African continent is still the least developed region of the world in economic terms, and that there are still more conflicts in Africa than in any other continent. As humanity enters the new millennium, Africa is in danger of being further marginalized. African issues are far from being resolved, and the international community still has a long way to go in that regard.

In the Security Council's open debate on the situation in Africa held this past September, I made the following five points on how the international community should proceed to resolve African issues. It should pay adequate attention to Africa from a strategic perspective; create a favourable external environment for Africa so that it can enjoy stability and sustained development; respect the choices made by African countries themselves; give vigorous support to efforts by regional organizations in Africa; and take concrete and effective measures to help African countries in their development endeavours. Today, I would like to emphasize two further points.

First, the key to the resolution of African issues is economic development. A number of initiatives on African development have already been proposed both within and outside the United Nations system. What is urgently needed now is to coordinate and prioritize these initiatives so as to avoid repetition and improve efficiency. We believe that the priorities should include stopping the continuous drop in official development assistance; reducing the debt burden of African countries to a sustainable level and helping them effectively raise funds; helping African countries in human resources development through education, technology transfer and other means and helping them reform their economic structure; and supporting African countries in their capacity-building in trade and market access and helping ensure that they get their fair share while effectively integrating themselves into the globalization process.

Secondly, United Nations bodies should strengthen their coordination and cooperation on African issues. Even though the Security Council has biennial Foreign Ministers' meetings on Africa in which relevant issues are regularly discussed, and even though the Economic and Social Council has also made African issues a recurrent item on its agenda, still, given the wide range of issues concerned and the complex internal and external factors involved, African issues can not be resolved by one or two institutions alone. We encourage more parties to get involved. Meanwhile, it is our hope that besides holding regular discussions on this issue, the General Assembly will further develop its coordinating role and take a more important part in mobilizing the international community and other relevant international organizations to increase their involvement in African issues.

China has always had close and friendly relations and cooperation with African countries. We have always supported the legitimate demands and reasonable requests of African countries, as well as their efforts to maintain political stability and promote economic growth. We respect the choice of political system and path of development made by African countries themselves in the light of their own national conditions. We support their economic development efforts. We are committed to strengthening Chinese-African economic cooperation and trade and have offered various kinds of assistance to African countries without attaching any conditions.

In order to enhance the cooperation between China and Africa, China will host a China-Africa Cooperation Forum, Ministerial Meeting 2000 next fall in Beijing. African Foreign Ministers and Ministers in charge of foreign trade and economic matters will be invited to participate in the meeting to exchange views on how to establish a new international economic and political order favourable to developing countries and how to strengthen Chinese-African economic cooperation and trade. We are

confident that with the concerted efforts and close cooperation of the two sides, the forum will produce positive results and will inject new vitality into the friendship between China and Africa.

Mr. Santos (Mozambique): We take great pride in the manner in which the President of the General Assembly is conducting the affairs of this body. We shall continue to render him our unconditional support.

In 23 days we will witness the end of the twentieth century and the dawn of a new millennium. It is therefore fitting that we gather here today to debate one of the greatest challenges of the United Nations and the international community as we cross into the new era. Our common success or failure will be judged by the degree to which we succeed or fail in addressing conflicts and the challenge of generating sustainable development in Africa.

The Secretary-General, a distinguished son of Africa, did a great service to the continent and the international community by identifying clearly the main causes of conflict in Africa and advancing recommendations for their durable settlement, as well as for promoting sustainable development. The report of the Secretary-General is an important instrument that highlights the critical situation of Africa and points the direction in which the international community should be moving.

In assessing the implementation of the report, we are happy to note that it has attracted wide interest and attention, and it has been analysed and debated in various forums both within and outside the United Nations. The use of the report by research and academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society at large when discussing issues related to peace, security and development in Africa is very encouraging. The solutions to Africa's problems require the participation and involvement of all stakeholders.

It has been stated on several occasions that the responsibility for resolving conflicts and promoting sustainable development in Africa lies with the Africans themselves. The African leaders have reaffirmed their commitment in recent Organization of African Unity (OAU) summits, particularly those in Algiers and Sirte, as well as in the global conferences. Africans have determined their goals and priorities and have established mechanisms for implementation. These are, to a large extent, reflected in the Secretary-General's report. However, it is evident that the Africans need the unconditional and invaluable support of the international community if they are to succeed in their efforts.

Many initiatives have been advanced aimed at addressing the various aspects of the African situation, both within the United Nations and outside. Most of those initiatives are yet to be implemented, and many remain simply on paper. The crucial factor in most of those initiatives has been the lack of financial and other resources to translate them into concrete action. Another equally important factor has been the lack of coherence, coordination and harmonization, resulting in overlapping and investment in less fundamental fields.

We therefore strongly support the consideration by the Economic and Social Council of the theme "Development of Africa: implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development". We attach great importance also to General Assembly resolution 53/92, which invited African countries and their partners to jointly identify and rank priorities in partnership, to define respective responsibilities and to agree on realistic and measurable targets in priority areas. This should allow for a comprehensive and holistic approach to the situation.

In most cases we will find that realistic plans and programmes have been adopted by the OAU and subregional organizations and simply require adjustments and resources for their effective implementation. The world conferences and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) have made a significant contribution in this regard.

In this context, we concur with the view that

> "the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as other multilateral and regional organizations and bilateral donors, [should] collaborate with the Government of each African country, and among themselves, in order to ensure the consistency of the various coordination mechanisms, favouring synergy, containing duplication, avoiding contradictions and simplifying, as appropriate, the modalities and procedures required by the functioning of these mechanisms". (*A/54/133, para. 103*)

The constant improvement and strengthening of coordination between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations is equally crucial.

The World Summit for Social Development has established the target date of 2015 for halving poverty. The importance of a substantial and sustained pace of economic growth, which the Secretary-General highlighted in his report, has to be at the rate of 7 per cent per year if we are to achieve this target. We seriously believe that this can still be achieved.

With adequate financing for development, we should be able not only to generate economic growth but also, and most importantly, to improve the living standards of our peoples by improving primary to tertiary education, health care and infrastructure and reintegrating refugees and displaced persons, thus gradually reducing poverty throughout the continent. A number of countries in Africa have shown that this is possible.

Financing for Africa's development will have to come from all sources — that is, from a substantial increase of official development assistance, reversing the current trend; domestic savings; diversified foreign direct investment; and international financial institutions. Africa has done a lot to create and constantly improve the enabling environment for local and foreign investment as well as for the effective and efficient use of the resources flowing to the region.

One important aspect in this regard is the issue of external debt, which remains an impediment to sustainable economic growth. Initiatives as useful as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative have not yet reversed the trend. The increase in external debt from 1997 to 1998 of $6 billion — which is more than 300 per cent of the value of exported goods and services — remains a cause for great concern. Solutions need to match the magnitude of the problem, and action has to be speedy and effective.

We are encouraged by the initiatives of individual developed countries to address the African problems. These initiatives include the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the Swedish Partnership with Africa and the United Kingdom Initiative on Eliminating World Poverty. We also value the assistance from and cooperation with our partners in the South.

There is no doubt that unless we settle the armed conflicts in Africa, all efforts aimed at promoting sustainable development will be in constant jeopardy. This is the reason why the leaders of our continent have spared no effort in seeking solutions to the conflicts ravaging the continent. This is evident in the cases of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Comoros and elsewhere in the region. Not only have our leaders sought to restore peace in those countries in conflict, but have also aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflicts, promoting reconciliation and tolerance and respect for human rights, as well as consolidating the government institutions, legislatures and judiciaries.

However, these efforts have not always been matched by timely and adequate support from the international community. Thus, the progress already achieved in some conflict areas has been endangered. The arguments often advanced for inaction or delays have led Africans to believe that the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole discriminate against Africa through the use of selective treatment. These perceptions are justified and do not ignore the generous support that has been extended to the continent on various occasions and in all fields.

We believe that the United Nations and the international community at large can do more and do it effectively. I come from a subregion that has witnessed the international community taking action for a common purpose. The cases of Namibia, South Africa and my own country, Mozambique, are very good examples of such action. But this is the same region that is witnessing a slow response by the international community to the opportunities to settle conflicts by peaceful means.

Nevertheless, we shall continue to work with all our partners, because we continue to trust our partnerships and our partners' desire to help us help ourselves.

We wish to register our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his progress report, contained in document S/1999/1008, on the implementation of his recommendations. We encourage him to continue with his efforts and dedication, and we pledge our support.

We welcome his decision to entrust the follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of his recommendations to the Deputy Secretary-General. This will certainly ensure greater inter-agency coordination and harmonization.

In conclusion, we would like to express our profound gratitude to the United Nations, to all the Member States, international organizations and institutions, and to non-governmental organizations for their contributions to peace and sustainable development

in Africa. We reiterate our appeal for more assistance in a spirit of cooperation, partnership and African ownership.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I must say that you, Sir, have a very special responsibility in leading this important debate that follows up the Secretary-General's recommendations to the General Assembly and the Security Council on ways to promote lasting peace and sustainable development in Africa.

One of the merits of the Secretary-General's report has been to provide the United Nations Member States and the various international organizations with a broad and realistic overview of the African situation. It also examines very closely the causes of existing conflicts and considers various strategies for overcoming these conflicts.

Last year, the Assembly invited the Economic and Social Council to focus on Africa during its annual coordination segment in order to improve coordination between the various existing initiatives, within and outside the United Nations, to promote development on that continent.

In my capacity as Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, I had the honour to preside over the work of the coordination segment at the request of the Bureau. The members of the Council responded with enthusiasm to the Assembly's appeal and set down their deliberations in the agreed conclusions that are contained in the Council's report. Furthermore, the Council expressly requested that its debate be brought to the Assembly's attention. I should like to mention only five of the points of the agreed conclusions in order to contribute to our consideration of this topic.

First, the Council recognized the existence of broad agreement on the priorities for African development as defined in the Cairo Agenda for Action and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. It also recognized the need to take note of the variety of country-specific situations and needs in the African region.

Secondly, the Council stressed the importance of various programmes and initiatives that are being undertaken by the United Nations, bilateral donors and multilateral institutions. At the same time, it believes that these initiatives require more effective coordination and harmonization of the implementation of all initiatives, better funding and stronger ownership by recipient countries.

Thirdly, in order to promote greater involvement of the African countries, national development strategies should form the basis and framework for overall coordination and national capacities should be strengthened. In this respect, the resident coordinators of the United Nations and the various external partners can make an important contribution. It will also be necessary clearly to define the roles to be played by the various stakeholders: Governments, parliaments and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Fourthly, as to programme financing, the catalytic role of the United Nations system could be strengthened if countries were able to rely on more stable, predictable and assured resource levels, in particular core resource levels, to which donor countries should contribute on an increased and sustained basis.

Fifthly and finally, the Council urged all agents for development in Africa to make greater efforts to coordinate and harmonize programmes. To this end, coordination among the bilateral donors, the United Nations agencies implementing programmes and the countries at the regional and subregional levels is required. Thus, the Council recommended that thematic consultations among all development partners be held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, with the involvement of the Organization of African Unity and African economic communities. In this respect, we welcome the resolution on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The Secretary-General tells us in his report on this item that, in order to bring about significant progress in African development, a more genuine supportive attitude on the part of donors and Africa's trading partners is needed. The countries of the continent will also have to rely on regional integration to promote economic discipline and facilitate the establishment of solid institutional confidence-building links at the national level between neighbouring countries.

Colombia has reached the same conclusion on the basis of the economic integration that has developed over the past 30 years between the five member States of the Andean Community and through the process of consultation and coordination among the countries of the Rio Group. Not only has a greater degree of confidence among the neighbouring countries emerged through this integration, but our country and region have also been

able to maintain a more extensive dialogue with other regions of the world.

In Africa, the persistence of certain international and domestic conflicts reminds us of the challenges faced by African societies in order to achieve a durable peace. Moreover, the levels of poverty, external indebtedness and official development assistance show how difficult it will be to achieve sustainable development. Nevertheless, my country welcomes recent positive developments in the economic, political and social situations of many African countries. These successes allow us to foresee Africa's spiritual rebirth into the world, which we all fervently embrace.

Mr. Essonghe (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Since the issuance of the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, my delegation has had the opportunity to speak at the ambassadorial and ministerial levels on this issue. Last September, it expressed its opinion during the consideration of the Secretary-General's mid-term report.

Today, we welcome the consideration of this item on the General Assembly's agenda, which allows us to stress the concrete aspects of the report with respect to progress made since the ad hoc Working Group established under Security Council resolution 1170 (1998) — over which my country had the honour of presiding — completed its work.

The Working Group capped its deliberations by proposing to the Council, which subsequently adopted them, four draft resolutions and two presidential statements on support for regional and subregional initiatives in the field of conflict prevention and peacekeeping; the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements; the strengthening of African peacekeeping capacities; increased effectiveness of arms embargoes; illicit flows of small arms and light weapons; and the Security Council's capacity to control the peacekeeping operations it authorizes. All these texts contain practical measures for the implementation of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report of April 1998.

Despite the interest and encouraging results that the Secretary-General's report has elicited, it must be noted that little progress and few tangible achievements have been made on the ground. At the economic level, the deficiencies and handicaps of African economies must be mitigated, given the fact that virtually all African conflicts are fueled by the imbalanced distribution of the fruits of expansion, which depend on economic health. The latter, in turn, depends on an international environment that is often inhospitable and hostile to African countries.

It is clear that Africa continues to progress along the path of respect for and promotion of fundamental individual freedoms, good governance and the resolution of the many conflicts that afflict it. But these efforts require support for the development measures undertaken by the African countries. It would be especially beneficial for them for the heavy debt burden to be dealt with or even cancelled.

It would also be beneficial to increase the amount of official development assistance and to reverse the tendency of decreasing trend of capital flows to the continent. United Nations specialized agencies, such as the Economic and Social Council, should accelerate the implementation of the recommendations within their competence.

Regarding conflict prevention and peacekeeping, we are awaiting the concerted implementation of resolution 1197 of 18 September 1998, as well as of the presidential statement contained in document S/PRST/1998/28 of 16 September 1998.

Specifically, we believe that it is necessary to strengthen contributions to the trust funds established by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to improve preparedness for conflict prevention and peacekeeping in Africa. In this connection, we welcome the good cooperation and coordination initiated by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity through the exchange of personnel.

The question of peacekeeping operations remains crucial, given the imbalances and delays stemming from the discriminatory treatment of conflicts between one region and another. Of course, this practice runs counter to the declarations of intent we often hear, as well as the aspiration of the United Nations to resolve conflicts.

The President took the Chair.

Resolutions 1196 (1998) and 1209 (1998) deal with questions related to arms embargo regimes and the destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons. It is encouraging to note that the Secretariat has not only had a number of contacts with regional African organs, but has also organized meetings on the illicit

circulation of weapons, such as the seminar on Central Africa held in July 1999.

It is also appropriate to pay a tribute to DeBeers, the South African company, and to one of the members of the Security Council for their contribution to the struggle against conflicts in Africa by taking concrete measures against a rebel movement in an African country.

As has been repeatedly stressed, the Secretary-General's report calls for a global response that takes into account the link between peace and development, which has been so well highlighted in the report. The implementation of that recommendation therefore requires the mobilization of all and a firm commitment that goes beyond mere declarations of intent if we wish to see the continent enter the third millennium in peace and participate confidently in building a better world.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): The general debate taking place in the General Assembly today and the various debates held at various levels in the United Nations emphasize again the importance that the international community attaches to the establishment of peace and to the creation of adequate conditions for lasting sustainable development so that the people of Africa can enjoy security and the economic conditions they deserve.

I should like to take this opportunity to convey my delegation's gratitude to the Secretary-General for his progress report regarding the implementation of the recommendations set out two years ago on the causes of conflict in Africa and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in that continent.

When this question was discussed at the last session, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that included very important recommendations. Like other decisions and recommendations adopted within the United Nations system and in other forums, the resolution provided momentum and support to efforts to establish peace in Africa and to strengthen the African economies. In Libya we appreciate that and the fact that the Secretary-General has participated concretely in assisting Africa to overcome the difficulties it faces and to promote its prosperity. The Secretary-General sent representatives and working groups and prepared many reports that contained a number of proposals and recommendations.

However, it must be noted that such expressions of solidarity and support have not been translated into action in response to the recommendations and resolutions because the United Nations has not given Africa what it has given other regions of the world, especially regarding conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations and adequate assistance to refugees. The United Nations withdrew from Somalia, leaving the country drowning in a most painful and bloody struggle. Angola was similarly abandoned in bitter conflict, except for the provision of weapons to extremist elements there. Humanitarian assistance to Africa remains below the requisite level because, as is highlighted in the Secretary-General's report in document S/1999/1008, the United Nations received only half of what was requested in order to meet humanitarian assistance needs in Africa in 1999.

Of course, all this is very sad indeed. We note that, beyond the resolutions, statements and declarations of intent that we have heard, what has been done is not commensurate with what is needed for the struggle against the problems afflicting Africa, such as the growing problem of AIDS, which has led to death and hopelessness; and what has been done has not put an end to the poverty lying at the root of social conflict. In addition, Africa is unable to reach world markets and to obtain fair prices for its export commodities.

Everybody knows that words alone will not resolve the problem of external debt, which has bled African economies white and has handicapped their development. By the same token, this problem will hinder Africa's efforts to resolve its humanitarian problems and deal with the consequences of natural disasters.

Despite the problems and conflicts taking place there and despite all the declarations of international support — even though such support is either limited or absent — Africa is seriously utilizing its capabilities and opportunities to overcome its economic difficulties, to strengthen economic cooperation within the continent and to set up social and economic groups at the regional level.

African wisdom has also made it possible to convince the parties to conflicts to resolve their differences, as has happened in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where arms have been put down and dialogue and negotiations have been embarked upon. The Lusaka Agreement, the Sirte agreement and others have had similar results.

Of course, in this context, the fourth extraordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State of the

Organization of African Unity (OAU), held last September in Sirte was a starting point of great importance for expressing the will and determination of the African heads of State or Government to take up the challenge of peace in the continent and to begin working for development. This reflects Africa's determination to face up to realities and to embark upon a new era, a new future in which Africa must count on its own capabilities and its own children. First and foremost, Africa fully realizes that the global aspect of development within the continent is something its children must be responsible for.

Nevertheless, Africa expects the international community to support its efforts. It is not possible for African countries, due to the limited nature of their resources, to put an end to all of Africa's ills. We need an international agenda that would check the spread of malaria and AIDS, from which half the people of African countries suffer. Working for peace would be a virtually useless effort if one did not strengthen the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, both politically and financially. A training programme is also needed.

It is the responsibility of the United Nations to strengthen and increase its aid to Africa to industrialize its production of primary commodities and to implement development plans for its seaports and airports, as well as for linking its various regions through a modern network of roads. This would provide a new impetus to Africa's development, which requires a revision of the unfair conditions that are now applied by international financial institutions and are imposed on Governments. It also requires the conclusion of new agreements offering fair prices for Africa's primary commodities.

We also call for the removal of obstacles in the way of African products reaching world markets. International solidarity with Africa requires a new dimension for the solution of economic problems. This must be done in order to resolve definitively the problem of external debt, which stands in the way of the economic development of African countries. The United Nations system must totally cancel the debts of African countries in order to establish a fair international system that would be beneficial to future generations.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): The report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871) provides a holistic approach to the problems of peace and development. It proposes detailed recommendations to bring about peace and to create a favourable environment for sustained economic growth and sustainable development in Africa.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/54/133 constitutes a progress report on the implementation of those recommendations, as well as on coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on Africa. I wish to take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for sparing no effort in advocating the development of Africa.

For the past two days we have been discussing Africa. Much has been said on the economic, social and environmental constraints facing Africa, not to mention the ongoing conflicts in some parts of our continent. Let me address some of those pertinent issues.

Indeed, as clearly pointed out in the report, Africa's development depends primarily on African Governments. It is for this reason that African countries continue to create the domestic conditions to bring about a favourable environment to enhance the prosperity of our people. However, there is also a clear consensus that only the sustained political will of the international community as a whole can make durable peace and sustainable development a reality in Africa. Effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report is indispensable for the realization of that goal.

Indeed, development in Africa is hindered by many factors, including conflict in some parts of the continent. Addressing the causes of conflict in Africa will enable us to tackle the roots of unnecessary bloodshed and the waste of human resources in our continent. In doing so, it is important to take into account both internal and external factors of conflicts in Africa. We would also like to stress the role of the United Nations in rendering assistance for post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction.

Furthermore, the need to strengthen the capacities of African countries to participate in all aspects of peacekeeping operations cannot be overemphasized. Recent experience in Sierra Leone should enable the United Nations to draw clear and unambiguous lessons on how the lack of resources can result in delayed peace and delayed development. The United Nations had the capacity to stop the horrors which occurred in Sierra Leone. All that was needed was the will to act and to act

in time. We must therefore ensure that timely action is taken by the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo so as to bring peace and development to that country. Thus, increased cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations should be increased. In this context, we in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are grateful for the assistance in support of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We call for continued assistance by the international community for the full implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Regional cooperation and integration are an important part of the process for Africa's recovery. Hence, the process for the establishment of the African Economic Community will benefit from enhanced regional cooperation. Various United Nations agencies are providing assistance in this regard, and we concur with the Secretary-General's recommendation for the need to examine ways and means to deepen support for regional integration.

The Secretary-General's report highlights the declining growth of many African economies. This is caused in part by lower commodity prices. Therefore, the international community should assist African countries to improve access for their commodities to markets. Adequate flows of official development assistance in line with agreed targets, as well as increased foreign direct investment, are indispensable to Africa's economic recovery. In addition, it is important for the efforts of African countries to be complemented through capacity-building and technical assistance so as to sustain the pace of economic growth and development.

In this respect, however, we draw attention to the concern indicated in the Secretary-General's report and to the need to redesign technical assistance so as to narrow and close the gap between African countries and industrial countries by accelerating the transfer of knowledge, skills and expertise.

Cognizant of the link between peace, democracy and development, Namibia has requested relevant United Nations agencies for assistance in strengthening institutions for public administration and has indeed benefited from that assistance in strengthening our governing institutions. No one can deny that the creation of institutions and regulations for the promotion of democracy, good governance, transparency and the rule of law is essential for sustainable development everywhere. The point we are making is that international economic and financial institutions should respond effectively to the reforms African countries are undertaking.

Let me now touch briefly on other developmental issues. Today, millions of our people continue to live in poverty. Some 44 per cent of Africa's population live below the poverty line, with a per capita monthly income of $39. Poverty in Africa is exacerbated by the debt burden, civil strife and lack of resources to implement projects to eradicate poverty.

Furthermore, the gravest threat in Africa to sustainable development is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The rapid, disproportional spread of the disease to women in Africa and the large number of AIDS orphans have serious implications for our future.

In your acceptance speech, in September, Mr. President, you had this to say:

> "our children continue to die of diseases long ago eradicated in the developed world." (A/54/PV.1, p. 6)

As if that were not enough to cope with, our children are today the prey of HIV/AIDS. A few days ago, here at the United Nations, we commemorated World AIDS Day. Who can ever forget the face of that orphaned young African boy who did not need to say a word about his pain, for his face said it all. There are many such faces today in Africa and unless concerted international action is taken we are headed for disaster. It was therefore no coincidence that during the Sixth Regional Conference on Women and Development, held in Addis Ababa, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and how to combat this pandemic, was highlighted. Given the disastrous economic and social impact of AIDS, it is crucial that this pandemic be urgently and effectively addressed.

Furthermore, the Sixth Regional Conference mapped out priorities and strategies for the next five years to accelerate the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, including the need to have national gender policies and well- designed monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to monitor progress achieved.

Indeed, various initiatives on Africa exist, including the Cairo Agenda for Action, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa and the Tokyo

International Conference on African Development. What is needed, therefore, is coordination and harmonization.

Last year, at its fifty-third session, the General Assembly decided to establish an open-ended ad hoc working group on Africa. It is our hope that working group will make use of the progress report of the Secretary-General, as well as the agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council adopted during the 1999 substantive session.

The causes of conflict in Africa are clearly spelled out in the report, as are the actions needed to promote peace and sustainable development. What remains is for there to be political will on the part the international community to implement the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report for the benefit of Africans and humankind as a whole.

Ms. Coelho Da Cruz (Angola): A year ago, the General Assembly discussed the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflicts and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871). Although some encouraging developments have taken place as a result of collective efforts made towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts, many conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the differences between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the current situations in Burundi, Somalia and in my own country — continue to be a source of concern to Africa.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress how important it is for the international community and the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, to take immediate action in supporting the peace accords sponsored by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and, in cooperation with the OAU, by regional economic communities — namely, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Regional and subregional organizations have an important role to play in preventive diplomacy, confidence-building, armaments control and the peaceful settlement of disputes. With regard to preventive diplomacy, it is crucial to improve the existing diplomatic mechanisms and other institutional frameworks to prevent, handle and find a peaceful solution to these conflicts. It is also important to strengthen those institutions capable of carrying out the peace efforts in order to generate a combination of instruments to prevent and monitor conflicts, on the one hand, and to manage those international peace instruments with special relevance to the regional context, on the other hand.

With regard to confidence-building — and notwithstanding the goals already achieved — the realities and scenarios of the regional conflicts are not substantially different with the end of the cold war, taking into account the fact that the common terms of strategic unity in Africa have disintegrated as a result of the end of global military bipolarity and the re-emerging geostrategic interests.

With regard to armaments control and restrictions, and taking into account that war regulations are an integral and crucial part of national defence, along with various other sovereign instruments, regional warfare and armaments restrictions are a necessity for African States for the following reasons: first, because there is no economy that can resist an unlimited expansion in military spending; secondly, because technological advancement is a functional imperative for defence; and thirdly, because regional military balances are dynamic, as each country has a natural limit on the development of its military capabilities, which, in turn, depends on those of other countries.

We support the holding of an international conference on small arms and light weapons in the year 2001. It is imperative that we take action to control and decrease the manufacture, transfer and stockpiling of small arms and light weapons, which are accountable for most of the casualties in the current conflicts. The non-controlled proliferation of this type of weapon helps create a climate of mistrust and suspicion and ultimately generates warfare, especially among the poorest countries in the world.

The clearance of anti-personnel landmines also needs the involvement and the support of the international community. The Angolan Government will give its commitment to the efforts at the national, regional and international levels to end this scourge.

As many delegations have stated, economic and social problems are among the root causes of conflicts. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the fact that the lack of political will on the part of the international community in most such situations perpetuates those crises. In the case of Angola, the Peace Accords concluded in Portugal in 1991, which led Angola to hold its first multi-party elections, under United Nations

verification, were simply thrown away by the party that lost the elections. It was subsequently proved that the losing party had no intention whatsoever to accept the ballot results even if they had been favourable to that party, since its aim was not reconciliation but revenge; and a new war of catastrophic proportions, after 18 months of ceasefire, was awaiting the Angolan people.

Thanks to the mediation of the United Nations and the patience and good will of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the late Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, to whom we pay moving tribute, it was possible, after a year of intensive negotiations in Lusaka, to achieve a new peace agreement, known as the Lusaka Protocol, which, as was immediately shown by the absence of its leader at the signing of the agreement, UNITA had no intention of fulfilling.

Under the new peace agreement, the United Nations was engaged in a costly and very complex peacekeeping operation in Angola, after obtaining assurances of political will from both parties to the peace agreement, the Government of Angola and UNITA. But, as a corollary to the lack of political will and the lack of desire for peace, UNITA deceived everyone, in particular the United Nations, whose mission was to achieve the cantonment, disarmament and demobilization of the UNITA army.

In an act of political fraud of heretofore unknown proportions, instead of demobilizing, UNITA mobilized new troops. Instead of disarming, UNITA reinforced its military capacity with highly sophisticated weapons. Instead of transferring to the State the areas under its control, UNITA occupied selected new areas in the diamond belt with a view to supporting the war efforts planned by Savimbi. And last but not least, UNITA has since then made efforts to spread the conflict to Angola's neighbouring countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Namibia.

Since 1992 the Security Council has been adopting resolutions strongly condemning Savimbi and UNITA and has undertaken efforts to reinforce the sanctions imposed on UNITA. We support the efforts of the sanctions Committee established under resolution 864 (1993) and we appeal to the Governments of Member States and to international organizations and non-governmental organizations to cooperate with the Committee and with the groups of experts in charge of the fiscalization of the implementation of the sanctions.

Nevertheless, the Angolan Government considers that the international community can and should do more in order to make Savimbi assume the consequences for this warlike and criminal behaviour, which is the cause of indescribable suffering for the Angolan people. Moreover, Savimbi bears responsibility for the killing of personnel of peacekeeping operations and humanitarian agencies, the shooting down of a United Nations aircraft, the shameful fooling of the international community and the murder of Angolans by the hundreds of thousands. For that reason, the OAU, the SADC and the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries consider Savimbi to be a war criminal.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the peace accords signed in July 1999 may be derailed because of the lack of an immediate response on the part of the international community. The warring factions are taking advantage of this situation to systematically violate the ceasefire agreement.

With the adoption of Security Council resolution 1279 (1999), the conditions have been created to start preparations for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission, which we hope will take place soon.

African countries are more than ever aware of their responsibilities, even while recognizing that the majority of their problems arise from legacies and injustices left over from colonial rule.

Refugees and displaced persons, whose situation is a direct consequence of an internal conflict, have generally become a considerable burden to neighbouring countries. To minimize the impact of such a situation on the host countries, international support and solidarity are of essential importance. We therefore vigorously urge all Governments, United Nations agencies and international humanitarian organizations to pledge their support.

Before I conclude, allow me to express Angola's concern at the continued decline in official development assistance. That decline and the minimal foreign direct investment in the continent are likely to prolong Africa's underdevelopment. Concerning the external debt, there is a need, as the Secretary- General pointed out, for the donor countries to review their policies and intensify their efforts towards more effective and efficient debt relief measures.

Mr. Menkerios (Eritrea): My delegation reiterates its highest appreciation of the Secretary-General's concern for and initiative on Africa, and commends his succinct report on the measures taken and results achieved concerning good governance and social and economic development in Africa. We further support, in essence, the recommendations for further action presented in the report under discussion.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, adopted by the General Assembly in 1991, set appropriate priority areas for Africa's economic recovery and development. Africa's development partners also committed themselves to support Africa in all its efforts for economic development and the establishment of peace and stability, which are essential for sustained development. The Secretary-General's report adequately describes the record of this cooperation hitherto and presents recommendations for more action in the future if such cooperation is to make a significant difference.

Eritrea is in agreement with the content and recommendations of this report. My country would only emphasize that Africa, despite the many obstacles inherited and internally exacerbated, is making an effort to solve its problems, and cooperation with it in its endeavours must be recognized and pursued not as charity, but in the interest of the collective good.

Basically because of the vigorous measures taken by many African countries for economic, political and social reform and regional cooperation, positive achievements have been made in economic growth, especially during the first half of the 1990s and through the middle of the decade. Collectively too, African countries adopted, at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit level, the Cairo Agenda for Action to relaunch Africa's economic and social development along the same lines as the United Nations Agenda. They have also established the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution to work for peace and stability, which are essential for sustained development. Indeed, through this Mechanism, and its regional organizations, Africa has made efforts and successful beginnings for the peaceful settlement of conflicts. If these have not been fully successful, it is not because of lack of concern or initiative, but because of lack of adequate capacity. It is the enhancement of this capacity, both in working for peace and stability and in ensuring sustained economic development, that Africa requires genuine partnership from its development partners, including United Nations agencies.

Peace and stability are necessary prerequisites for economic and social development, and recent developments in Africa have fully demonstrated this fact. Despite the efforts and achievements of the OAU and African regional organizations, conflicts in Africa have increased during the second half of the 1990s. It is thus not surprising that not only has human suffering in all its aspects increased, but the rate of economic development also has declined during that period. Although other external factors have contributed to this decline, it is essentially the eruption and extension of conflicts that has crippled Africa's internal capacity to concentrate on issues of development. As stated yesterday by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his address to the Assembly on the present agenda item, the lack of political will on the part of some of the protagonists to resolve conflicts through peaceful means has led to an expanding cycle of instability that is engulfing wider areas of the continent.

In the case of the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the OAU — with the support of the United Nations, regional organizations such as the European Union, and concerned countries, particularly the United States — has laboriously worked to resolve the border conflict peacefully for the past 19 months. In the process, the OAU has prepared and presented a set of proposals, namely, the Framework Agreement; the modalities of implementation; and the technical arrangements for the implementation of the Framework Agreement and its modalities.

My country, Eritrea, has fully accepted this package of proposals, making the necessary compromises in the interest of peace. It has done so officially and unequivocally, and it has been and is ready for their implementation. It is unfortunate that I have to report to the Assembly, however, that the Ethiopian Government has just reiterated categorically its rejection of the OAU package of peace proposals. It did so after having held the implementation of the peace package hostage by setting ever new conditions and after having presented questions for clarification and received detailed answers from the OAU.

Ethiopia's Prime Minister declared in a public statement on 7 December 1999 that his Government rejected the package, and he issued a call to his countrymen to be ready for war. The official statement issued on 8 December 1999 by the Ethiopian Government spokesperson, after reiterating Ethiopia's rejection of the peace package as unacceptable, taunted the entire international community by stating:

> "Recognizing Ethiopia's position, the international community should cease its futile attempt to pressurize the Ethiopian Government to sign the existing technical arrangements."

To accentuate the firmness of the Ethiopian regime's rejection of the OAU peace package, the statement concludes with a definitive position:

> "The current path pursued by international mediators is not the path to a peaceful resolution of the conflict."

In the face of Ethiopia's rejection of the OAU peace package and of its threats to resort to force, Eritrea and its people will have no option but to stand firm to defend their sovereignty and dignity. But what do we expect from the international community, the international institutions that are entrusted with promoting and defending international peace and security? The Security Council has supported and endorsed the OAU peace proposals as fair and balanced. It has consistently declared its strong support for the continued efforts of the OAU and the supportive efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy and of concerned countries.

Only two days ago, when discussing the agenda item on cooperation between OAU and the United Nations, the Permanent Representative of Finland, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), also voiced wider international support when she reiterated that the EU "strongly support[s] the OAU package of peace agreements" (A/54/PV.72), and urged its implementation. Ethiopia's rejection of the OAU peace package is a rejection of — and, therefore, an affront to — the collective stand and will of the entire international community. If such a rejection, and such persistence in continuing on the path of war and aggression as is being shown by the Ethiopian Government, is not challenged by concrete and concerted international action, the international community will not only fail Africa in its efforts for peace and development but also risk undermining the credibility and capacity of the very instruments it has established for its collective peace and security.

This is a test case, not only for the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia, our immediate region and Africa as a whole, who count on the United Nations to stand firmly on the side of peace against those who stand for war, but also for the very principles and institutions of the United Nations itself.

We believe that the United Nations must not fail take firm action against Ethiopia, which has decided challenge the efforts of, and the stand taken by, the OA and the entire international community for the peacef settlement of the conflict, thus jeopardizing the peace a stability of our entire region, Africa and the world.

Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda): I privileged once again to take the floor to address t representatives here assembled on a subject of su immense importance to Africa in particular, and t international community in general. I am referring to t question of peace, security and development. Eighte months have passed since, in April 1998, the Secretar General issued his report on the causes of conflict and t promotion of durable peace and sustainable developme in Africa (A/52/871). The report was a landma document, and it will remain a point of reference f years to come. Today we are conducting a review. Wh is the state of the balance sheet?

On the eve of the new millennium, Africa is st faced with the interlinked challenges of peac democracy, human rights, good governance a sustainable economic development. Let me begin on t positive and bright side. Today there is a new generati of political, institutional and economic reforms design to accelerate economic growth, promote democra governance and sustain efforts to wage war on pover I am pleased to report that yesterday in Nairobi, und the guidance of President arap Moi of Kenya and w the good offices of the Carter Center, President Museve of Uganda and President Al-Bashir of Sudan signed agreement by which the two leaders committ themselves to normalizing relations between the t countries.

In July this year, the Lusaka Agreement for peac under the guidance of President Chiluba of Zambia, w signed by all the belligerent parties in the Democra Republic of the Congo. Peace is returning to war-to Sierra Leone. Warring factions and parties have be reconciled in Guinea-Bissau. When I wrote this statem yesterday, I wrote that we were looking forward to t day when Ethiopia and Eritrea would accept t Organization of African Unity (OAU) peace process. B sadly, we have just been informed that one of the part has rejected the OAU efforts.

On the democratic front, too, Africa, which w ruled by authoritarian regimes, both civilian and milita is experiencing change. The 1990s have witnessed a sh

away from authoritarianism and the ushering in of democratic reforms. In spite of all the tragedies that are besetting the continent, the region is moving forward, and some have even spoken of an African renaissance, notwithstanding the faltering nature of its steps. Uganda welcomes the positive developments in Nigeria which have restored civilian rule through democratic elections. In Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and elsewhere, citizens are now electing their Governments. The challenge for Africa is that we must sustain an agenda for democracy and good governance. To achieve this objective, Africa needs to strive to produce leaders with vision, leaders who are pragmatic and committed to peace and to the economic transformation of the continent.

On the economic front, the 1980s were described as the "lost decade". But who can say the same at the end of the 1990s? After those lost opportunities, Africa's economic performance has improved and the outlook has brightened. Real gross domestic product for the region as a whole is growing by 4 to 5 per cent per year. Incomes are on the rise, although not as fast as we would wish. African countries are experiencing economic recovery. In the early 1990s, fewer than 20 countries enjoyed growth rates of 3 per cent. But by 1997, many countries — 40 of them — had doubled their growth rates. Inflation is also on the decline. Fiscal deficits have been cut in the past five years. All of these developments constitute a remarkable reversal of the constant drift towards poverty and represent a trend towards continuing positive growth.

Speaking at the OAU summit in Harare in 1997, the outgoing Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Mr. Michel Camdessus, rightly cautioned that these improvements do not warrant euphoria. Nevertheless, they are encouraging as we look to the future. They give us optimism because they are not the result of accidents or luck, but of improved economic and financial reforms undertaken by African Governments. The results may not be uniform, but the trend is clear.

In spite of the positive trends which we have outlined, Africa still faces serious challenges. We know too well that the signing of a peace agreement does not necessarily bring peace; it is simply the beginning of a process. The way forward cannot be travelled, however, by Africa alone; Africa needs the commitment of the international community to its future, particularly the commitment of the Security Council. We also know that the mere holding of elections is no panacea that will bring democracy and good governance. Human rights and the rule of law have to be respected and safeguarded.

Experience has shown that conflicts can be predicted and prevented, not only through early warning but also through early prevention measures. Preventing conflicts is a difficult and long-term process, but it offers better prospects: it is cheaper, not only in preventing the loss of human lives but also in terms of the destruction of infrastructure. It prevents human tragedies like that of Rwanda; it limits the number of refugees and internally displaced persons — of whom Africa has the largest number. To prevent conflicts, the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, must give conflict prevention a higher priority on its agenda. That means devoting more resources and mustering the political will to respond to the early warning signs and to provide a rapid response.

It is sad, however, that as of now there appears to be an unacceptable absence of rapid response to African conflicts. Where thousands of lives could have been saved, thousands are lost due to what we might call foot-dragging — and what else can we call it? Let us take just one example: the Lusaka peace process. The Lusaka Agreement was signed in July 1999, but thus far the response from the Security Council has been very disappointing. In the face of a serious threat that the peace process could fall apart, what do we see? We see repeated visits by survey teams. Survey teams do not protect the peace.

Nevertheless, my delegation welcomes the very robust approach taken by Ambassador Holbrooke of the United States, who is currently visiting Africa. But what is important is to translate the bold words into actions that will safeguard and further what are still fragile peace processes, not only in the Democratic Republic of the Congo but also in Sierra Leone. That would help focus Africa's energies on peace and economic development.

Let me now turn to the subject of the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. My delegation commends the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Security Council for the attention that is being paid to the menace of small-arms proliferation. In September this year, at its 4048th meeting, the Security Council addressed that very subject. In the same vein, my delegation commends the Governments of Canada and of Australia for the lead role they have played in this area.

Let me just briefly outline the menace of small arms and light weapons. Largely as a result of the illicit trade in small arms, Africa remains at war with itself. Of the

25 major conflicts in the world today, 24 are in Africa, and they are fueled by small arms. Besides the loss of human life, another direct consequence of the dozens of conflicts currently under way in Africa is that scarce resources have been diverted from more pressing socio-economic development needs to military expenditure. Although defence budgets may be on the decline in many places, Africa has been estimated to be spending nearly $800 billion on military expenditures, according to the authoritative Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

A number of African countries at war spend as much as 50 per cent of their budgets on war equipment. In the words of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan,

> "Small arms cause big tragedies. Readily available and easy to use, they have been the primary or sole tools of violence in almost every recent conflict dealt with by the United Nations. In the hands of irregular troops operating with scant respect for international and humanitarian law, small arms and light weapons have taken a heavy toll of human lives, with women and children accounting for a high proportion of the casualties. They have driven people from their homes, undermined development, led to increases in crime and social violence and thwarted the prospect for investments". (*Press Release SG/SM/7078*)

Let me turn to the positive side of the small-arms question. It is gratifying that African Governments too have begun to address this scourge. In August this year, representatives from nearly all African countries gathered in the capital of Togo, Lomé, for an international workshop on illicit trafficking in small arms. At the thirty-fifth summit of the Organization of African Unity, held in Algiers in July this year, African heads of State or Government recommended the convening of a regional conference in 2000 to address this problem. The conference would recommend steps to solve problems related to the use and transfer of these arms.

In July this year the Government of Liberia began a process of destroying all weapons that had been decommissioned from the civil war. President Taylor of Liberia and the people of Liberia merit the world's recognition for their wise decision.

These and many other positive developments are major steps towards the consolidation of peace. We would like to see more of them in the rest of the continent.

For Africa to consolidate peace, it needs partnerships. We need partnerships not only to overcome the problems of conflict, but also to develop the capacity to eradicate poverty and the capacity to embark upon economic growth and to support open markets. We need partners to build our institutions. My delegation commends the Group of Seven and other partners for their contribution to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. But debt is still a crushing burden for many countries. We welcome discussions on the total write-off of Africa's debt.

Let me go back to the military crisis and emphasize that without rapid response to conflicts and in conflict prevention and conflict resolution, without rapid response in the consolidation of peace, conflicts that have undermined African efforts towards economic growth and development will continue. And I emphasize too that Africa needs such responses from the United Nations and from the international community at large. These responses are essential benchmarks in the building of durable peace. We emphasize our call to the United Nations and the Security Council to respond more rapidly to the crisis in Africa.

Finally, allow me to thank all those delegations that have participated in this debate. Their participation and their presence are a demonstration of their concern and an expression of solidarity with Africa and its endeavours to overcome conflicts and to address problems of sustainable development.

Mr. Apata (Nigeria): My delegation appreciates this opportunity to contribute to the discussion of agenda item 46, "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". Peace is at the centre of development. Conflicts not only wreak havoc on the physical infrastructure of States engulfed in conflict but also create social turmoil. It is for this reason that development cannot take place in situations of crisis and conflict. This informs our role in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Restoring peace to Liberia was an objective for which Nigeria deployed huge material and human resources. Our desire to rid our subregion of conflict has further compelled us to be involved in Sierra Leone. It is gratifying that the United Nations has now joined forces with ECOWAS in the peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts in Sierra Leone.

Our efforts are not limited to the West African subregion. Since our independence, we have played a

major role in facilitating the peaceful resolution of conflicts in various parts of our continent. That is why we are pleased that today many States in southern Africa which were previously in conflict situations are now playing prominent roles in peacemaking efforts in that part of our continent. Only recently, an important initiative was taken by seven heads of State or Government, at the urging of President Olusegun Obasanjo, to hold a meeting of the Gulf of Guinea Joint Commission in Libreville, Gabon. The principal goal of the Commission is to promote peace and stability through development. This initiative clearly underscores the determination of the Gulf of Guinea leaders to promote development as a conflict-prevention mechanism.

It is against this background that my delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in document A/54/133-E/1999/79. The wide range of measures highlighted in the report, if successfully implemented, will contribute to turning a continent that has become synonymous with conflict to a continent of peace. We agree with the Secretary-General that measures such as strengthening good governance, social development, improving trade flows and support for regional cooperation and integration will contribute to the rapid transformation of Africa in the socio-economic domain while reinforcing peace and stability. There is a plethora of organizations, including the United Nations system, involved in peace-building in States emerging from conflict in Africa. We welcome these efforts. However, the impression is often given that the members of the donor community, including non-governmental organizations, are competing among themselves. As a result, there is duplication of efforts, programmes and projects. An example is the area of governance, in which the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and several bilateral donor agencies duplicate each other's efforts. It is of crucial importance, therefore, for a mechanism to be put in place to remove this overlapping and duplication, especially given the background of dwindling financial resources.

The need to address more constructively and productively some of the major problems facing African countries, highlighted by the Secretary-General in September last year during his meeting with representatives of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee, remains urgent. Implementation thus far on the issues of external debt burden, official development assistance, market access and foreign direct investment has, according to the current report, not removed Africa's need for access to the markets of industrialized countries. While my delegation commends those countries which have met, and indeed exceeded, the 0.7 per cent official development assistance target, it is sad to observe that several developed countries have continued to renege on this. Surely, if there is political will, developed countries will have no difficulty in meeting this target.

African leaders accept that the primary responsibility for promoting the economic development of their societies is theirs. In this regard, it is important to recall that African leaders, on their own, launched the initiative called the Cairo Agenda for Action for relaunching Africa's economic and social development as the response for moving Africa out of poverty and transforming their economies to a level at which we can become equal partners in the global economic system. To this end, African leaders are redoubling their efforts and working assiduously towards the early realization of the African Economic Community. The economic integration of the continent is one sure way of preventing conflict and promoting social and economic development. Positive results are already being recorded at the subregional level, particularly among Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries.

In conclusion, the promotion of peace on the continent must be packaged to achieve the following minimum political and socio- economic objectives. It must look far beyond current conflict situations and incorporate substantial rehabilitative entrepreneurial schemes, which will promote genuine reconciliation between people and prevent relapse into conflict. It must restore collapsed infrastructure, particularly in educational and health infrastructures, as well as in telecommunications, energy, and transport. It must free African countries of their crippling debt burden to enable them to finance development projects. It must enhance the competitiveness of African products and advance cooperation and the integration of the African economies into a mutually beneficial global economy. Finally, it must rapidly assist African States to show their peoples the value and importance of peace in terms of the tangible benefits — peace dividends — which the ordinary people can identify with.

The President: In accordance with the decision taken at the 74th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, yesterday, I now call on the observer of the Holy See.

Monsignor Panikulam (Holy See): In addressing the annual Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in Algiers on 12 July 1999, the Secretary-General made a new analysis of the African situation. He criticized the persistence of deadly conflicts and the dangerous flow of arms. He praised the progress made by some countries and urged good governance and concerted action.

In 1995 Pope John Paul II, who sees himself as a friend of Africa, stated,

> "Africa bears the scars of its long history of humiliations. This continent has too frequently been considered only for selfish interests. Today Africa is asking to be loved and respected for what it is. It does not ask for compassion, it asks for solidarity."

But in his address of 11 January 1998 to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, the Pope stated,

> "If violent attainment of power becomes the norm, if insistence on ethnic considerations continues to override all other concerns, if democratic representation is systematically put aside, if corruption and arms trade continue to rage, then Africa will never experience peace or development, and future generations will mercilessly judge these pages of African history."

On 24 April 1998, Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran, the Holy See's Secretary for Relations with States, addressing the Security Council, put forward five priorities of the Holy See with regard to Africa: respect for life and ethnic diversity, poverty eradication, ending the arms flow, the resolution of conflicts and action, motivated by solidarity, to achieve development. Those priorities remain the same today, perhaps with renewed urgency.

The Holy See delegation would like at present to focus on two main points in particular: the deadly conflicts and the inadequate development in Africa.

Since 1970, more than 30 wars have been fought in Africa. Almost all of the 53 countries of Africa are afflicted by armed conflicts. Each conflict has caused more than a million deaths and created the same number of refugees and almost the same number of displaced persons. More than 20 million children either have fallen as victims of conflicts or have become homeless, disabled or orphans. Tens of thousands are constrained to take up arms and fight as soldiers. There are conflicts that have lasted for more than a quarter of a century, and in Africa the world has witnessed for years unthinkable atrocities such as genocide and maiming. Violence begets hatred, and hatred results in continued atrocities. This has been an ongoing process for years and decades, threatening the security of the entire continent and causing the international community to be increasingly uninterested in Africa, so much so that the conflicts in Africa have become forgotten wars. In addition, often the initiatives undertaken by the international community are rejected by the parties to the conflicts, thus rendering the international community's concerted efforts ineffective. Or else, powers, far and near, connive to condemn such international actions to failure.

That is only one side of the picture. The other side is the vexing poverty that has become chronic in some parts of the continent. According to the recent Food and Agriculture Organization report, nearly 10 million people in sub-Saharan Africa need emergency food assistance. And, as noted by the Secretary-General, 44 per cent of Africans as a whole and 51 per cent of those in sub-Saharan Africa live in absolute poverty. Even the level of official development assistance to Africa is falling.

Africa, which suffers from deteriorating poverty, abounds in weapons, be they purchased on the grey or black market. West Africa alone is estimated to possess more than 8 million small arms. Leaders of areas rich in diamonds sell them to acquire more sophisticated weapons. Poorer countries, on the other hand, even mortgage crops to acquire small arms. Despite the recommendations of the Secretary-General that African States should reduce their expenditure on weapons and ammunition to 1.5 per cent of gross national product, and should have zero growth in their defence budgets for 10 years, things are still moving in the opposite direction in too many States.

This is a strange paradox. Impoverished countries acquire large quantities of weapons to kill, and rich countries, from within Africa and from abroad, profit from the thirst for power of a few, dooming millions to utter starvation. Until the constant flow of arms to Africa is curbed effectively, the conflict situations are going to continue causing an even more dangerous turn of events. Those who accumulate weapons at the cost of hunger-ridden millions and those who provide them with such weapons for extra profits are equally guilty in the process. That crime on both sides should not continue.

Resolving conflicts remains the first step towards security and development in Africa. But concerted action and political will both from the African leadership and from the international community are urgently called for to accelerate sustainable development.

Development is the new name for peace. That is all the more true of Africa today, vexed by conflicts and ravaged by poverty. Instead of cursing the past and repeating the question "What can the world do for Africa?", it is time for Africans to look to the present and future and ask "What can Africans themselves do for Africa?".

The international community, for its part, must ensure that Africa envisages its own economic development. Cancellation of foreign debts, opening of markets without setting burdensome conditions, preferential economic assistance and adequate transfer of technology and human resources are the urgently needed steps. But all such international initiatives will have to respect the situation special to Africa and the requirements of its different regions and populations.

Peace is the fruit of solidarity and this is the time to reaffirm solidarity for Africa. Isolation and marginalization, of which Africa has been a victim in the past, should end and the international community should then lend it a strong helping hand to take the next and most deliberate step forward into peace and prosperity.

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Nega (Ethiopia): The representative of Eritrea, in his statement under the agenda item on causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, referred to the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea and, in the usual style of doublespeak and distortion, attempted to mislead and confuse this Assembly on a number of points.

I wish at the outset to draw the attention of this Assembly in general, and in particular of those who may be prey to the misinformation campaign we just heard, to the fact that Ethiopia, from the very onset of this crisis, has shown commitment to and respect for the efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) by accepting its peace proposals and continues to be engaged with that continental organization's ongoing efforts. It is indeed an insult to the intelligence of this body that the Eritrean representative had the temerity to accuse Ethiopia of rejecting the OAU peace efforts, while it is a well-known fact that Eritrea has never had faith in the OAU or its efforts right from the onset of this crisis.

The representative of Eritrea, in his statement, did not mention the cause of the crisis between the two countries, although the very agenda item under which he spoke deals with the causes of conflict in Africa. The crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea is caused by Eritrea's blatant armed aggression against Ethiopia and its forcible occupation of our territory in May 1998. This has been established by the OAU and by other third parties involved in the peace efforts and confirmed in their proposals and recommendations requesting Eritrea to withdraw from occupied Ethiopian territories.

The Eritrean authorities must be judged not by what they say, but by what they have done and are doing and by what they are prepared to do. So far, what they have said and what they have done and are doing make us and others who know them first-hand sceptical about their sincerity, especially when they pose as disciples of peace. Experience has shown in the past 19 months — at least in connection with the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict — that what the Eritrean authorities have said and continue to say has never matched what they have done and what they are doing.

Soon after they launched an armed aggression against Ethiopia, the Eritrean authorities denied the fact that they had committed an act of aggression against Ethiopia and presented themselves as victims of aggression and as peace-loving. But in reality, they were the ones who committed aggression and obstructed all peace proposals, including the OAU Framework Agreement, which they now purport to champion.

It is to be recalled that Eritrea's refusal to accept and implement the OAU Framework Agreement and its continued acts of provocation led to major conflict between the two countries in February 1999, in which Ethiopia was able to liberate Badme, one of the territories forcibly occupied by Eritrea. Within 24 hours of its occupation forces being routed from Badme, Eritrea notified the Security Council of its acceptance of the OAU Framework Agreement and suddenly became a new

convert in embracing the OAU proposal. But again, in reality, Eritrea's conversion was not sincere, as one can conclude both from the letter of the President of the country dated 27 February 1999 addressed to the President of the Security Council, and from subsequent actions of Eritrea on the ground. Clearly, Eritrea's belated and insincere acceptance of the OAU Framework Agreement was a public-relations gimmick and a time-buying tactic for regrouping its defeated army to launch military offensives, as it subsequently did in March, June, September and late October 1999. Now, the Eritrean authorities are again preaching peace and pose as disciples of peace, as we heard in the statement of the Eritrean representative a while ago.

But one should again ask the question: What are the Eritrean authorities doing now? Are they making preparations to withdraw their troops from the Ethiopian territories, as the OAU Framework Agreement requires them to do? Or are they busy digging trenches and sending more and more troops and equipment to these territories? The Eritrean authorities are busy doing the latter.

It is with this record that the Eritrean authorities present themselves as champions of peace and shamelessly accuse Ethiopia of obstruction. As to Ethiopia, our only objective and demand remain the full restoration of the country's sovereignty over all its territories forcibly occupied by Eritrea since May 1998. Nothing more, nothing less.

The quotations made by the Eritrean representative from our Prime Minister's interview with the local media are highly selective and grossly distorted, again designed to mislead this Assembly and international public opinion at large. The position stated by our Prime Minister regarding Ethiopia's demand for the withdrawal of the invading Eritrean army and for the full restoration of the status quo ante that existed before the Eritrean invasion has been Ethiopia's long-standing and consistent position. It can by no means be labelled, as the representative of Eritrea labelled it, a rejection of the OAU Framework Agreement and the modalities for the implementation of the Framework Agreement.

The OAU Framework Agreement and the modalities for its implementation, adopted by the African heads of State or Government, require Eritrea to withdraw from all Ethiopian territories. Ethiopia has accepted these two documents fully and without conditions and wishes to see the faithful and unadulterated implementation of these two OAU documents.

Any attempt to amend or dilute — as Eritrea has consistently sought to do — the key provisions of the two OAU documents relating to Eritrean withdrawal and the full restoration of the status quo ante that existed before May 1998 would be tantamount to rewarding aggression and therefore cannot be acceptable to Ethiopia.

It is in this spirit that Ethiopia sought clarification on the document known as the technical arrangement and believes that in order for this document to be acceptable it must be brought in line with the two basic documents endorsed by the OAU at the level of the heads of State or Government and fully accepted by Ethiopia.

The President: As a fellow African, I must tell Ethiopia and Eritrea that I am ashamed and disappointed.

Many of our friends from outside Africa have once again taken the opportunity of this meeting and of this debate to reiterate their solidarity with and support for Africa. They have pledged to continue assisting Africa in its efforts to achieve the noble goal of peace, so as to allow for development.

We have a lot of work ahead of us. I must appeal for restraint and brevity. We are not really convincing anybody in the General Assembly. We have made this case so many times before, here and in other places. We want to see an end — and soon — to the conflict between two sisterly countries, neighbours: Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Mr. Menkerios (Eritrea): I perfectly understand the frustration people must be feeling over the very unfortunate continuation of this conflict, which could and should be resolved by peaceful means.

It is a fact that actually it is the Government of Ethiopia's unilateral and forcible alteration of the borders established between the two countries, at the time of decolonization, that is the root cause of the conflict. Eritrea has demanded, and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Framework Agreement has specified, that an independent investigation be conducted of the developments that led to the eruption of the conflict, so as to establish definitively who is responsible and who is the aggressor.

Ethiopia has expressed its displeasure with this investigation and is demanding that Eritrea be condemned as the aggressor without an investigation. The reason for this must be because Ethiopia knows very well what the results of such an investigation would be. Ethiopia is the

aggressor and bears responsibility for the eruption and escalation of this conflict.

But let us await the results of the investigation instead of asking the international community to take a decision. We are not acting in haste because we are confident of what the outcome of this investigation will be.

The OAU package of proposals contains the following sequence of measures: first, the cessation of hostilities; secondly, the redeployment of the troops of both sides to positions held before the outbreak of hostilities, that is on 6 May; thirdly, the placement of international monitors and peacekeepers in the disputed areas; and fourthly, the demarcation of the border on the basis of established treaties and relevant international law.

This is what Ethiopia is rejecting. Ethiopia is demanding that before demarcation Eritrea and the mediators recognize disputed territories as sovereign Ethiopian territories. Again, why? Is the Ethiopian Government afraid of the outcome of a legal demarcation?

If Ethiopia says that Eritrea has not accepted, we have accepted. Are they ready to sign tomorrow and start the process of implementing those peace proposals? We are.

So instead of beating around the bush, there is a set of proposals that has taken 18 months for the OAU, with the support of the United Nations and concerned countries, to come up with. They are on the table.

Clarifications have been requested. Clarifications have been given. We are now being asked to sign the proposals and implement them.

We are ready. Eritrea stands ready, even here and now, to sign and start the process of implementation. Is Ethiopia?

I think that a short question like that would get us to the answer, rather than elaborate speeches about who is rejecting, who is accepting.

The President: I call on the representative of Ethiopia, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Nega (Ethiopia): I regret to be taking the floor once again, but some points should be made very clear. First, as regards the cause of the conflict: it has already been established beyond any doubt by third parties, independent parties, including by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), that Eritrea committed an act of aggression against Ethiopia and that the cause of this crisis is Eritrean aggression.

In its findings and report to the OAU, the OAU ministerial fact-finding committee — which was established, *inter alia*, to collect information regarding the origin of the crisis — rejected the Eritrean assertion which we heard just now and determined that it is

> "of the view that what happened in Badme between 6 and 12 May constitutes a fundamental element of the crisis"

and

> "that Badme and its environs were administered by Ethiopia before 12 May 1998".

Thus, there is no question about who started this problem and who bears responsibility for it.

Secondly, Ethiopia accepted the two basic documents from the very outset, and, again, there is no doubt. Ethiopia is not afraid of demarcation. The two documents clearly stipulate that there will be a demarcation, which we are committed to.

But the two documents make it very clear that before this demarcation takes place the Eritrean troops must withdraw from the Ethiopian territories that they have occupied by force.

It is very clear and understandable that borders cannot be changed by force and international law must be adhered to. This is the basic thrust and essence of the OAU Framework Agreement and the modalities to which Eritrea consistently objected. Eritrea still continues to seek the amendment of these modalities through various means, including through the document just mentioned here, so as to allow it to remain on Ethiopian soil as a reward for its unprovoked aggression.

Ethiopia is ready to sign any agreement, but let Eritrea show its commitment, first and foremost, to withdraw from the Ethiopian territories it occupied by force. This is the key issue.

The President: I should like to inform members that a draft resolution on this item will be submitted at a later stage.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.

United Nations A/54/PV.76

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-fourth session

76th plenary meeting
Thursday, 9 December 1999, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Reports of the Sixth Committee

The Acting President: This afternoon the General Assembly will consider the reports of the Sixth Committee on agenda items 152, 153 and 155 to 161.

Members will recall that the Assembly considered the report of the Sixth Committee on agenda item 154 at its 55th plenary meeting on 17 November 1999.

I request the Rapporteur of the Sixth Committee, Mr. Joško Klisović of Croatia, to introduce in one intervention the reports of the Sixth Committee before the General Assembly.

Mr. Klisović (Croatia): On 17 November 1999, I had the honour to present to the General Assembly the report of the Sixth Committee on agenda item 154, "United Nations Decade of International Law", which the General Assembly adopted at the plenary meeting dedicated to the closing of the Decade.

I have the honour today to present to the General Assembly the reports of the Sixth Committee on the remaining nine agenda items allocated to it, namely items 152, 153 and 155 to 161.

Concerning agenda item 152, "Convention on jurisdictional immunities of States and their property", the relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/54/607, and the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption appears in paragraph 11 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would, *inter alia*, decide that the open-ended working group of the Sixth Committee established by resolution 53/98 of 8 December 1998 will continue its work at the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly. It would also invite States to submit their comments on the report of the Working Group of the International Law Commission and would urge those States that have not already done so to submit their comments in accordance with resolution 49/61 of 9 December 1994.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will do the same.

I now draw the Assembly's attention to agenda item 153, "United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/54/608. The draft resolution which the Sixth Committee recommends to the General Assembly for adoption is reproduced in paragraph 8 of the report.

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This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would, *inter alia*, approve the guidelines and recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, which provide for the award of a number of international law fellowships and travel grants, both in 2000 and in 2001.

The General Assembly would further request the Secretary-General to continue to provide the necessary resources to the budget for the Programme of Assistance for the next and future bienniums. Additionally, the General Assembly would decide to appoint 25 Member States as members of the Advisory Committee on the Programme of Assistance, for a period of four years beginning on 1 January 2000.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution under item 153 without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I now turn to agenda item 155, "Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-first session". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/54/610, and the draft resolutions recommended to the General Assembly for adoption are to be found in paragraph 11.

By draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-first session", the General Assembly would decide, without prejudice to any future decision, that the next session of the Commission will be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 1 May to 9 June and from 10 July to 18 August 2000. It would recommend that the International Law Commission continue its work on the topics in its current programme.

The draft resolution would also reiterate its invitation to Governments to submit comments and observations on the draft articles on the prevention of transboundary damage from hazardous activities under the topic of international liability for injurious consequences arising out of acts not prohibited by international law, and on national legislation, decisions of domestic courts and State practice relevant to diplomatic protection. It would also invite Governments to respond to the questionnaire on unilateral acts of States circulated by the Secretariat.

The draft resolution would furthermore take note of paragraph 608 of the report of the Commission with regard to the procedure to be followed with respect to the topic "International liability for injurious consequences arising out of acts not prohibited by international law" and would request the Commission to resume consideration of the liability aspects of the topic as soon as the second reading of the draft articles on prevention is finalized. It would also take note of the consideration by the Commission of its long-term programme of work and would encourage the Commission to proceed with the selection of new topics and to present possible outlines for new topics in accordance with the wishes and preoccupations of States.

Operative paragraph 10, regarding the split session, was adopted by a vote of 111 in favour and 1 against with 4 abstentions. The draft resolution as a whole was adopted without a vote. It is hoped that the Assembly, too, will adopt this resolution without a vote.

By draft resolution II, entitled "Nationality of natural persons in relation to the succession of States", the General Assembly would express its appreciation to the International Law Commission for its valuable work on the topic and to the Special Rapporteur and the Chairman of the Working Group for their contribution to that work. It would also decide to include the item in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session, with a view to the consideration of the draft articles and their adoption as a declaration at that session. It would furthermore invite Governments to submit subsequently comments and observations on the question of a convention on nationality of natural persons in relation to the succession of States, with a view to the General Assembly considering the elaboration of such a convention at a future session.

It is hoped that the General Assembly, like the Sixth Committee, will adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

I now turn to agenda item 156, entitled "Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-second session". The Sixth Committee's report on this item is contained in document A/54/611, and the draft resolution recommended for adoption is found in paragraph 8 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would commend the Commission for the progress made in its work and reaffirm the mandate of the Commission to coordinate legal activities in this field. It would also reaffirm the importance of the work of the Commission concerned with training and technical assistance and would stress the importance of bringing into effect the conventions emanating from the work of the Commission.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. The Assembly may wish to do so, too.

Let me now turn to agenda item 157, entitled "Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country". The report of the Sixth Committee is in document A/53/612, and the draft resolution recommended is in paragraph 8 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the Assembly would, *inter alia*, request the host country to continue to take all measures necessary to prevent any interference with the functioning of missions and express its appreciation for the efforts made by the host country. The Assembly would request the host country to consider removing the travel controls previously imposed on staff of certain missions and staff members of the Secretariat of certain nationalities. It would also request the host country to continue to take steps to resolve the problem relating to the parking of diplomatic vehicles.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. It is hoped that the Assembly will be in a position to do likewise.

I now turn to the report of the Sixth Committee presented under agenda item 158, entitled "Establishment of the International Criminal Court". The report is contained in document A/54/613, and the draft resolution recommended is in paragraph 8.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would call upon all States to consider signing and ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The Assembly would also request the Secretary-General to convene the Preparatory Commission, in accordance with resolution F adopted by the Rome Conference, from 13 to 31 March, 12 to 30 June and 27 November to 8 December 2000, to carry out the mandate of that resolution. The Assembly would further request the Secretary-General to invite, as observers to the Preparatory Commission, representatives of organizations and other entities that have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly, pursuant to its relevant resolutions, as well as representatives of interested regional intergovernmental organizations and other interested international bodies. In addition, the Assembly would note that non-governmental organizations may participate in the work of the Preparatory Commission by attending its plenary and its other open meetings, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote, and it is hoped that the Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I now invite the Assembly's attention to agenda item 159, entitled "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization". The report is contained in document A/54/614, and the three draft resolutions which the Sixth Committee recommends for adoption are reproduced in paragraph 15 thereof.

By draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization", the General Assembly would, *inter alia*, request the Special Committee to continue its consideration of all proposals concerning the question of the maintenance of international peace and security in all its aspects in order to strengthen the role of the United Nations. It would also request the Special Committee to continue to consider, on a priority basis, the question of the implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions imposed under Chapter VII of the Charter. The Assembly would further request the Special Committee to continue its work on the question of the peaceful settlement of disputes between States, to continue to consider proposals concerning the Trusteeship Council and to continue to consider, on a priority basis, ways and means to improve its working methods and enhance its efficiency. It would also commend the Secretary-General for his continued efforts to reduce the backlog in the publication of the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs* and endorse his efforts to eliminate the backlog in the publication of the *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*.

By draft resolution II, entitled "Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions", the General Assembly would, *inter alia*, renew its invitation to the Security Council to consider the establishment of further mechanisms or procedures for consultations as early as possible under Article 50 of the Charter with third States affected by the application of sanctions under Chapter VII. It would welcome the report of the Secretary-General containing a summary of the deliberations and main findings of the ad hoc expert group meeting on developing a methodology for assessing the consequences incurred by third States as a result of preventive or enforcement

measures, and would request the Secretary-General to present to the Assembly his views on the deliberations and main findings, including the recommendations, of the ad hoc expert group. The Assembly would further decide to transmit the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 2000.

By draft resolution III, entitled "Strengthening of the International Court of Justice", the General Assembly would, *inter alia*, express its appreciation to the International Court of Justice for the measures adopted to operate an increased workload with maximum efficiency, invite the Court to keep its working methods under review, and invite States that appear before the Court to consider favourably the guidance offered by the Court in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General containing the comments and observations of the Court.

The Sixth Committee adopted these three draft resolutions without a vote. The Assembly may wish to do the same.

I turn now to agenda item 160, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism". The report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/54/615. The two draft resolutions recommended to the General Assembly for adoption are reproduced in paragraph 13 of the report.

Under the terms of draft resolution I, entitled "International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism", the General Assembly would adopt the said Convention. It would also request the Secretary-General to open the Convention for signature at United Nations Headquarters in New York and would urge all States to sign and ratify, accept, approve or accede to the Convention.

By draft resolution II, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", the Assembly would strongly condemn all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, wherever and by whomsoever they are committed. Furthermore, the Assembly would decide that the Ad Hoc Committee established by General Assembly resolution 51/210 of 17 December 1996 would continue to elaborate a draft international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism with a view to completing that instrument. The Ad Hoc Committee would also address means of further developing a comprehensive legal framework of conventions dealing with international terrorism; this would include considering the elaboration of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. The Ad Hoc Committee would further address the quest convening a high-level conference under the auspi the United Nations to formulate a joint orga response of the international community to terroris

The Assembly would decide also that the Ad Committee would meet from 14 to 18 February devoting appropriate time to the consideration outstanding issues relating to the elaboration of a international convention for the suppression of a nuclear terrorism, and that it would address the qu of convening a high-level conference. The Ass would also decide to continue the work within a wo group of the Sixth Committee, from 25 Septembe October 2000, including beginning consideration view to the elaboration of a comprehensive convent international terrorism within a comprehensive framework of conventions dealing with interna terrorism. The Assembly would further decide th Ad Hoc Committee would be convened in 20 continue its work.

The Sixth Committee adopted that draft reso by a vote of 116 in favour to none against, abstentions.

I turn finally to the report of the Sixth Com on agenda item 161, entitled "Review of the Stat the United Nations Administrative Tribunal". That is contained in document A/54/616, and the decision recommended to the General Assembly is in paragraph 10 of that report. By the terms of th decision, the General Assembly, desiring to revi provisions of the statute, taking note of the pro made by the delegations of France, Ireland a United Kingdom, and mindful of the comments m them by States, would decide to include this item provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session.

The draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote. It is hoped the Assem will adopt the draft decision.

That concludes my introduction of the report Sixth Committee. On behalf of the Committee, I express our gratitude to the President of the Assembly for the guidance and assistance he acco the Sixth Committee throughout its work duri session. I also wish to thank the Chairman of th Committee, Mr. Phakiso Mochochoko, as well other members of the Bureau — His Exc Ambassador Andrés Franco, Ms. Victoria Hall

Mr. Hiroshi Kawamura — for the valuable advice, support and friendship they gave me.

Finally, I wish also to express my gratitude to the Secretary of the Sixth Committee, Mr. Václav Mikulka, and to the other members of the Secretariat staff — in particular Ms. Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto and Mr. Manuel Rama-Montaldo — for the invaluable assistance they accorded me throughout the session and in the preparation of the various reports of the Sixth Committee.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Sixth Committee that are before it today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Sixth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401 the Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Sixth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise in advance. This means that where a vote was taken, we will do the same. Also, I should hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Sixth Committee.

I should like to inform members that the report of the Sixth Committee on agenda item 155, entitled "Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-first session", will be taken up as the last item this afternoon to permit time for the issuance of the report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution I under this item.

Agenda item 152

Convention on jurisdictional immunities of States and their property

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/54/607)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/101).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 152?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 153

United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/54/608)

The Acting President: The Assembly will next consider the report of the Sixth Committee on agenda item 153.

I call on the representative of the Solomon Islands for an explanation of vote or position.

Mr. Fruchtbaum (Solomon Islands): Solomon Islands will join the consensus on this draft resolution. Nevertheless, we sought a programme designed to reach as many people as possible through electronic and print media, schools and adult education. Unfortunately, the

funding available is very limited, and the programme is set through the year 2001. My delegation believes that the funding available to the programme will always be very limited as long as its objectives are very limited. While the provision of some international law fellowships and travel grants and assistance to the international law seminars and funds for several law courses are indeed commendable and welcome, it is pitifully little in the face of what needs to be done. If the Member States are truly interested in achieving the widest appreciation of international law, an undertaking my delegation believes is vital for the future of humankind, the United Nations knows how to mobilize its resources and how to generate more.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/102).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 153?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 156

Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-second session

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/54/611)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/103).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is t wish of the General Assembly to conclude consideration of agenda item 156?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 157 (*continued*)

Report of the Committee on Relations with the Ho Country

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/54/612)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now tak a decision on the draft resolution recommended by th Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolutio without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishe to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolutio 54/104).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is th wish of the General Assembly to conclude consideration of agenda item 157?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 158

Establishment of the International Criminal Court

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/54/613)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now tak a decision on the draft resolution recommended by th Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Sixt Committee without a vote. May I consider that th Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolutio 54/105).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is th wish of the General Assembly to conclude it consideration of agenda item 158?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 159

Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/54/614)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 15 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 54/106).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 54/107).

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Strengthening of the International Court of Justice".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 54/108).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 159?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 160

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/54/615)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Cuba, who wishes to speak in explanation of position before action is taken.

Ms. Álvarez Núñez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Cuban delegation will support draft resolution II in document A/54/615 in order to reaffirm once again the role of the General Assembly, as the truly universal organ of this Organization, in the adoption of measures to deal with acts of international terrorism.

As always, Cuba condemns all acts, methods and practices of international terrorism in all their forms and manifestations, wherever and by whomever they are committed. This includes terrorism encouraged, financed or tolerated by States themselves. Likewise, Cuba supports all efforts of the United Nations system in the struggle against acts of terrorism. This includes support for the holding of an international conference under the auspices of this Organization in the search for an international legal framework and for cooperation to deal with terrorist activities.

Nonetheless, international terrorism is seldom thoroughly considered, either from the standpoint of its causes or from that of its deepest and most alarming interconnections within societies. In this respect, we believe it necessary to define terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and to establish the necessary distinction between acts of terrorism and the right of peoples to struggle for their self-determination and against domination or foreign occupation.

The Cuban delegation, in supporting draft resolution II in document A/54/615, reaffirms once again the relevance and validity of all the resolutions adopted by this Assembly on the subject of international terrorism.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Iraq, to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Al-Kadhe (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is taking the floor regarding the draft resolution on measures to eliminate international terrorism because we have several comments on the draft

international convention for the suppression of the financing of terrorism.

First and foremost, the draft convention does not contain a definition of terrorism and how it is financed, nor does it contain the question of State-sponsored terrorism. This essentially opens the way for abuses. Nonetheless, because of Iraq's firm opposition to terrorism, a position based on international law and the Charter of the United Nations, Iraq will be associating itself with the consensus on this draft resolution.

The Government of the Republic of Iraq has reservations regarding article 11, paragraph 5, of the draft international convention for the suppression of the financing of terrorism, because many States are bound by regional agreements, established on the basis of specific regional needs, regarding the extradition of criminals.

I would like Iraq's statement and reservations to be reflected in the records of this meeting.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 13 of its report.

The General Assembly will first turn to draft resolution I, entitled "International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 54/109).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism". A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic

Draft resolution II was adopted by 149 votes to none, with 2 abstentions (resolution 54/110).

[Subsequently the delegation of the Philippines informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions.

Mr. Tarabrin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation welcomes the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and considers it an important contribution to the strengthening of the international legal foundation for the struggle against terrorism.

We are somewhat concerned, however, by the fact that the wording of the Convention may enshrine the opportunity for refusal, in certain specific circumstances, to extradite or to afford mutual legal assistance for some offences it covers. The Russian Federation expressed a similar concern at the adoption in 1997 of the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, a concern which it confirmed in a statement made at the signing of that instrument.

We should like once again to inform the General Assembly of our principled position. The Russian Federation's view is based on the need to apply the provisions of article 15 so as to ensure the impossibility of evading responsibility for offences that are covered by the Convention, without prejudice to the effectiveness of international cooperation on extradition and legal assistance.

Mr. Diab (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation fully and sincerely shares the general feeling of delegations that today's adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism in resolution 54/109 is a very important event and a significant achievement. The delegation of Lebanon joined in the consensus on the resolution because we believe that the international community must be encouraged in this effort and in the affirmation of our solidarity with it, in the hope of eliminating terrorism in all its forms. My country's delegation wishes, however, to express the following reservations concerning some of the provisions of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

First, we have reservations about the fact that the Convention does not define terrorism, which opens the door to different interpretations in accordance with States' political purposes and desires. That could have a pernicious effect on the cooperation required under the Convention.

Secondly, we have reservations about the fact that there are no detailed rules established to guarantee the safety of third parties, especially under paragraph 1 of article 2 of the Convention.

Thirdly, we have reservations concerning paragraph 1 (b) of article 2, which includes offences to be covered under the Convention that are beyond the scope of terroristic offences as defined in one of the treaties listed in the annex. The determination of a type of action, or the context in which it may take place, and the use of that determination to define terrorism against a Government or individuals not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict would suggest the potential for varying political interpretations when no terrorist act has taken place, especially given the differences between various legal systems.

Fourthly, my delegation also wishes to express its reservations on paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 1; articles 5 and 8; paragraph 2 of article 12; and articles 13 and 18, the wording of which is inconsistent with the laws of banking secrecy in Lebanon.

In conclusion, Lebanon emphasizes that it will work with the international community, in the framework of its existing national rules, to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 160.

Agenda item 161

Review of the Statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/54/616)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision, entitled "Review of the Statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal", without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 161?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 155

Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-first session

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/54/610)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/658)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions I and II recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report.

Draft resolution I is entitled "Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-first session". The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution I is contained in document A/54/658.

I have been informed that no separate vote has been requested on operative paragraph 10 of draft resolution I.

The Assembly will therefore take a decision on draft resolution I. The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 54/111).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution II, entitled "Nationality of natural persons in relation to the succession of States".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 54/112).

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 155?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Sixth Committee before it.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.